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## E-Inclusion guidelines: supporting diversity

### Immigrant Inclusion by eParticipation Project

University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education  
2012-03

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Immigrant inclusion  
by participation

**E-inclusion guidelines:  
supporting diversity**

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# E-inclusion guidelines: supporting diversity

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# Foreword

This publication is geared towards everybody involved in designing or working with participation processes and immigrant integration issues, especially the issue of enhancing democratic participation.

The integration of immigrants is vital for social cohesion and economic development. To enable immigrants to feel part of a larger society it is necessary to ensure that they have proper tools to participate fully in society. For this purpose, both the European Union as well as its Member States have been developing an increasing number of policy initiatives in the field of integration. Common to these strategies should be the adherence to human rights standards and shared values such as equality, non-discrimination, solidarity, openness, participation and tolerance.

In recent decades, significant changes in the patterns of political participation have occurred, in particular with the introduction of IT. Internet and electronic social networks have enabled new forms of social and political participation. Accordingly, there has been a growing demand for electronic communication not only between individuals but also between individuals and public authorities. Research indicates that the Internet may act as a social capital building system fostering social and community ties through social media. It also has a potential for enhancing civic participation.

The incorporation of information and communication technologies into democracies may also bring about some challenges and limitations. E-participation benefits from the interactive and participatory technologies for increased inclusion. Paradoxically, however, e-inclusion may exclude some groups in society. Marginal groups including immigrants, for instance, may be excluded from political life due to various challenges in the e-inclusion and in the e-participation field. Careful and participatory planning is needed in order to make e-participation inclusive. This manual, therefore, is a very timely and valuable resource for authorities and immigrant organisations in Estonia, Finland, Sweden, but also elsewhere, to consult in their e-inclusion strategies.

This manual firstly presents the conceptual and contextual backgrounds of participation, online participation, and relevant policies in the world and in Estonia, Finland, and Sweden. The crucial asset of the manual is in chapter 4 where we see an analysis of the obstacles of e-participation based on the empirical data. The chapter provides authorities with advice on how to cope with the obstacles arising from different scenarios. The manual then presents a list of e-tools to further help authorities to adjust their policies, services, and management to the needs of e-participation and e-inclusion of immigrants.

This manual is a result of a joint and fruitful development process of the European Union Interreg IVA project. The Immigrant Inclusion by eParticipation (IleP) partners were, from Finland: the University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education, University of Helsinki, Communication Research Centre and the Ministry of Justice, Democracy and Language Affairs Unit, from Sweden: Södertörn university, Departments of Media Technology and Informatics at the School of Communication, and from Estonia: Tallinn University, Institute of Informatics, Communication Research Centre. The manual can be found in English, Estonian, Finnish and Swedish language.

I am confident that this manual will be most beneficial for readers in their efforts for a more inclusive society.



**Head of the IleP project Steering Group**

**Johanna Suurpää**

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Language Affairs and Fundamental Rights Ministry of Justice, Finland

# Contents

## Introduction

## Conceptual background

<b>2.1. Key terms</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2.2. Framing e-participation</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2.2.1. Participation</b>	<b>12</b>
2.2.1.1. Ladders of participation	
2.2.1.2. Levels of participation	
2.2.1.3. Types of participation	
2.2.1.4. Characteristics of participation	
2.2.1.5. Participation tools for immigrants	
<b>2.2.2. Participatory ICT and immigrants</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.2.3. e-participation</b>	<b>16</b>
2.2.3.1. Spheres of e-participation	
<b>2.2.4. Benefits of citizen inclusion by (e-) Participation</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.2.5. High level challenges in e-participation</b>	<b>20</b>
2.2.5.1. Representative democracy	
2.2.5.2. Digital divide	
2.2.5.3. Political elite	
2.2.5.4. Different definitions and misconceptions	
2.2.5.5. E-participation challenges for immigrants	

## Contextual background on e-participation

<b>3.1. International context of e-participation</b>	<b>23</b>
3.1.1. International trends and policies	23
3.1.2 The initiatives of European Union bodies	25
<b>3.2. The Processes of inclusion and participation</b>	<b>25</b>
3.2.1 Inclusion and participation as a two-way process	25
3.2.2. Users and roles in participation	26
3.2.3 Steps of inclusion	27
3.2.4 Process charts and inclusion plans: Examples and further details	32

## Coping with obstacles to e-participation

<b>4.1. Access</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1.1. Limitations and differences in language	36
4.1.2. Lack of ICT skills	40
4.1.3. Usability and e-services	41
4.1.4. Inefficient information dissemination to immigrants and immigrant organisations	43
4.1.5. Lack of access to information/ knowledge sharing	46
<b>4.2. Interaction</b>	<b>49</b>
4.2.1. Interaction: lack of communication and discussion skills	49
4.2.2. Interaction: lack of resources	52

4.2.3. Incomplete interaction and feedback process	53
4.2.4. Interaction: lack of motivation	53
<b>4.3. Cultural/political culture differences</b>	<b>54</b>
4.3.1. Cultural differences in communication	54
4.3.2. Culture: dissimilar approach to democracy	56
4.3.3. Culture: different understandings	57
4.3.4. Political culture: different perceptions and assumptions	57
4.3.5. Political culture: resistance to change	58
4.3.6. Political culture: lack of inclusion and lack of equality	59
<b>4. 4. Technical/management</b>	<b>60</b>
4.4.1. Resources	60
4.4.2. Technical/ Management: persistence of old habits and old networks	62
4.4.3. Technical/Management: arbitrariness	63

## Toolbox

<b>5.1. Inform</b>	<b>66</b>
5.1.1 E-mail lists	66
5.1.2. Web publishing	66
5.1.3. Blogs	66
5.1.4. Microblogs	67
5.1.5. Vlogs (video blogs/video sharing tools)	67

5.1.6. Social networking sites	68
5.1.7. Translation tools	69
5.1.7.1. Making a website multilingual	
5.1.8. Aggregating tools	69
5.1.9. Web feed	69
<b>5.2. Consult</b>	<b>70</b>
5.2.1. Petition and voting tools	70
<b>5.3. Involve, Collaborate and Empower</b>	<b>71</b>
5.3.1. Planning tools	71
5.3.1.1. Inclusion process planning	
5.3.1.2. Scheduling meetings and events	
5.3.2. Collaborative working tools	72
5.3.2.1. Document creation and editing tools	
5.3.2.2 Wikis	
5.3.2.3. Visualisation tools	
5.3.2.4. Online slide presentation tools	
5.3.3. Instant messaging & voice and video call	75

## Conclusion

## Bibliography



## CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

Immigrant Inclusion by eParticipation (IleP) is a multi-stakeholder regional project conducted under the Central Baltic Interreg IV Programme from October 2009 to April 2012. The lead partner in the project is the University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education, Finland. The other project partners include Tallinn University, Institute of Informatics, in Estonia; Ministry of Justice in Finland; University of Helsinki, Media and Communication Studies in Finland; and Södertörn University in Sweden.



“#iieppro Mauri Kaipainen pointed out that immigrant integration and participation in the society has been problematic.

@Fevenc

The IleP project has been implemented to improve social, political and cultural inclusion of immigrants in the Central Baltic region by using information and communication technology (ICT), and community and collaborative technologies (CCT) also known as social media. The project aims to:

- Bridge tools, activities and concepts of citizen communities and governments' top-down participation
- Improve practices and technologies in terms of interoperability and integration
- Facilitate community building by developing relationships between immigrant communities and authorities
- Promote more effective participation of immigrants in society.

The proposed outcome of the project is to produce manuals for sharing best practices and problem solving. The present document is one the manuals written for use by the authorities.

Since the Internet has become accessible to the majority of citizens in most European countries, it is justified to consider the social media paradigm as

a potential instrument for supporting citizens' more effective social, political, and cultural participation in society. However, as emphasised in the EU's i2010 program and particularly in the Riga ministerial declaration, many obstacles remain on the way to harnessing new ways of using these services to facilitate inclusion and participation of marginalised groups, in particular by addressing outdated administrative practices and incompatible technologies.

This is also true of development in the Central Baltic countries. Recent advances in web-based CCT such as wikis, blogs, and content sharing applications appear to open new kinds of self-organising community practices and applications which support these goals in a self-organising, bottom-up fashion.

This manual aims to provide an analysis of the challenges and limitations of e-participation with regard to immigrants in the IleP countries, and to offer advice to authorities on how to cope with those obstacles.

## Structure of the manual

### Part 1:

#### Theory and overview of practices

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Conceptual background

Chapter 3: Contextual background

### Part 2:

#### Challenges and solutions

Chapter 4: Coping with obstacles to e-participation

Chapter 5: Toolbox

Chapter 6: Conclusion

*Bibliography*

The first part of the manual, *Part 1: Theory and overview of practices*, includes both conceptual and contextual backgrounds on e-participation.

The *conceptual background* on e-participation permits the reader to gain a theoretical framework of the concept. This background, on an abstract level, may permit authorities to start evaluating the position and the approach of their institution to e-participation.

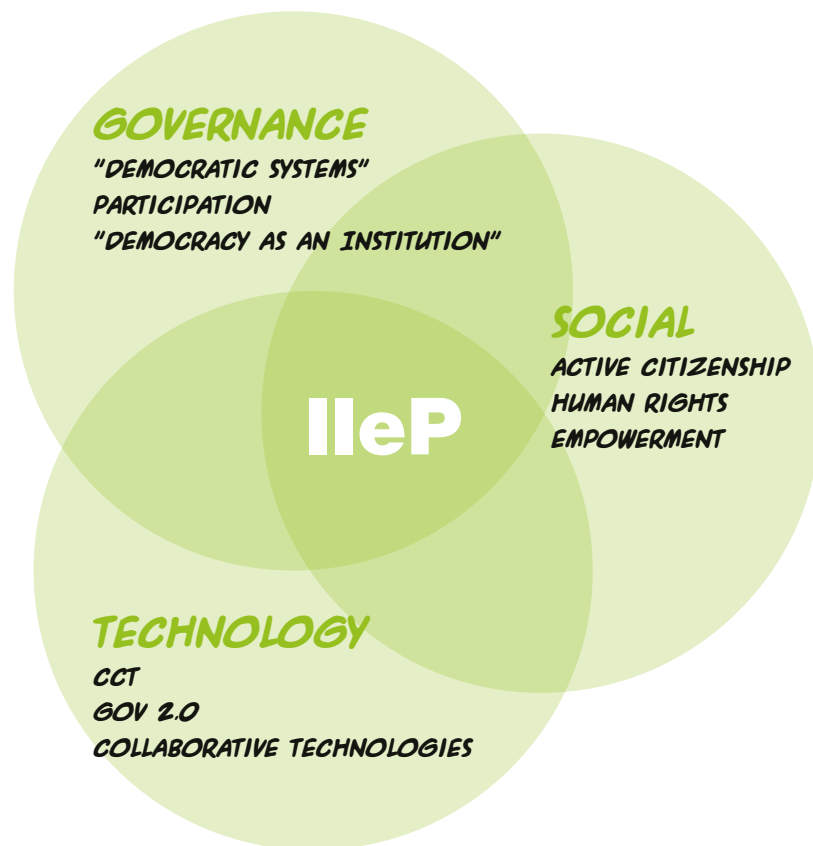
The next chapter presents the *contextual background* with the processes and policies of e-inclusion and e-participation starting at the global level and then focusing on three neighbouring countries—Estonia, Finland and Sweden, by providing examples from both the international and local levels.

The second part of the manual, *Part 2: Challenges and solutions*, focuses on the IleP countries and the obstacles which authorities may encounter, particularly with regard to the e-participation of immigrants. The fourth chapter, *Coping with the obstacles to e-participation*, identifies and analyses obstacles to e-participation. The second part of the chapter then provides solutions to authorities on

how to potentially cope with these obstacles by providing practical and concrete advice and presenting examples. The chapter presents advice systematically, in accordance with the issues found throughout the underlying research regarding the inclusion of immigrants.

In an effort to provide the authorities with as many concrete e-tools and case studies as possible to promote the use of effective e-tools, the second part also includes Chapter 5 *Toolbox*, where readers will find tools and examples which help implement activities like publication of information, translation, management, collaboration, and participation.

Methodologically, project data was collected by organizing workshops, conducting interviews, and making observations, as well as by studying literature on e-participation. The data collected using these methods have been analysed in the e-participation theoretical framework. This is a multi-stakeholder regional project, implemented collaboratively online by using the very tools that are recommended to be employed by the authorities. The advice that the manual presents based on these analyses is the result of collaborative online work by the IleP



partners. The partners will present advice about how to overcome the challenges of e-participation with regard to immigrants, and want to note that this advice is meant to inspire authorities with sample micro scenarios to improve their e-inclusion and e-participation policies. Authorities and other readers will of course need to apply this advice in a way that is best suited to the conditions of their organisations and stakeholder networks.

The content of this manual is freely available to anyone for reading and sharing purposes. Re-use requires proper citation of the source and its authors.

This manual, including updates and additional information, can be found online at [supportingdiversity.eu](http://supportingdiversity.eu).

## CHAPTER 2

# Conceptual background

A conceptual background of e-participation permits the reader to gain a theoretical framework of the concept and is necessary before introducing the more practical sections of the manual. It is helpful to discuss the meaning of e-participation and various aspects related to it in depth in order to give the reader a quick conceptual overview and perhaps fill in the gaps regarding this concept. This background on the abstract level may enable authorities to begin evaluating the stance and approach of their institution to e-participation.

### 2.1. Key terms

Before framing e-participation, below is a list of key terms that will frequently pop up in the rest of manual.

**Access:** The means to enter into, contact and communicate with systems, people, and organisations. Access to ICT, information, and people is crucial for e-participation.

**Interaction:** A reciprocal action or influence. Online interaction between authorities and citizens is indispensable for e-participation.

**Stakeholder:** A person, group, or organisation which may affect or be affected by another organisation's actions. Immigrants, for instance, are among the stakeholders for the authorities.

**Decision-making partner:** A stakeholder who actively and equally takes part in a decision-making process. Including as many stakeholders as possible often improves e-participation.

**e-governance:** The integration of ICT in governance processes. The UN states that "E-governance will favourably impact the productivity and performance of the public sector and foster new and deeper citizen involvement within the governing process"<sup>1</sup>. E-governance is not only about the adoption of new technology, but includes redesigning governing processes and the ways in which governments and people interact with each other.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.itu.int/wsis>

### Collaboration and Community Technologies –

**CCT:** In this manual, collaboration and community technologies – "CCT" is a subset of "ICT". We would like to draw attention to the collaborative interaction between people using computer-mediated communication (CMC), which means that an action is initiated by someone, a response or reaction or perhaps even a chain of reactions is generated by people who received the communication, resulting in dialogues, actions or decisions taken by the participants in the communication process. We might then define "collaboration and community technologies" as: Equipment (phones, computers) and software environments which allow communication between people over electronic channels (the Internet, mobile technology) enabling them to exchange personally valuable information, which may result in developing group-awareness, changed understandings, added knowledge, and further actions among the people participating in the communication process.

**e-inclusion:** Inclusion in the public administrative process means considering other people, making decisions and carrying out these decisions together with them (Hinsberg; Kübar (2009:4). Inclusion in

decision-making creates the possibility of achieving better results and avoiding mistakes. “Better” can mean different things here: decisions that are better informed, with more accurately estimated impacts, which are more realistic, more efficient, better understood, more widely supported, and implemented more promptly (Hinsberg and Kübar (2009:7)<sup>2</sup>

The eEurope Advisory Group, co-ordinated by Kaplan (2005) defines the term e-inclusion as follows: *e-Inclusion refers to the effective participation of individuals and communities in all dimensions of the knowledge-based society and economy through their access to ICT, made possible by the removal of access and accessibility barriers, and effectively enabled by the willingness and ability to reap social benefits from such access.*

The term e-inclusion includes both inclusive ICT and the use of ICT to achieve wider inclusion objectives. It focuses on participation of all individuals and communities in all aspects of the information society. A policy of e-inclusion, therefore, is aimed at reducing gaps in ICT usage and promoting the

use of ICT to overcome exclusion, improve economic performance, employment opportunities, quality of life, social participation and cohesion.

## 2.2. Framing e-participation

Steven Clift, an expert on e-democracy, describes the concept as “to many, e-democracy suggests greater and more active citizen participation enabled by the Internet, mobile communications, and other technologies in today’s representative democracy as well as through more participatory or direct forms of citizen involvement in addressing public challenges” (publicus.net)<sup>3</sup>. Macintosh (2004) emphasises in e-democracy means citizen engagement, support of the democratic decision-making processes, and strengthening of (representative) democracy. The democratic processes of decision making can be divided into two main categories:

- addressing the electoral process, including e-voting,
- addressing citizens’ e-participation in democratic decision-making.

It is crucial to have an overview of the concept of participation to make the most of the new information and communication technologies for enhanced e-participation policy and implementation. The following presents the different ladders, types, and levels of participation before it introduces the interaction of ICT and participation, e-participation.

### 2.2.1. Participation

There are different ladders, types, and levels of citizen participation. In most cases these differences stem from the characteristics of the democracy model a country adopts. Representative, deliberative, and participatory democracy models determine how and how much citizens may participate in politics at the decision-making level.

This manual is aimed at improving the current online participation practices for citizen empowerment. Thus the definition of participation we adopt is the following:

*Citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberate-*

2 Estonian Inclusion Handbook (2009)

3 <http://www.publicus.net/articles/edemresources.html>

ly included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parcelled out. (Arnstein: 1969:1)<sup>4</sup>.

### 2.2.1.1. Ladders of participation

In order to improve citizen participation, authorities need to evaluate where their participation policy fits in with the different ladders and types of participation. As seen in the table below, if the objective is to educate citizens by manipulation or therapy we cannot call it participation. If citizens are informed, express themselves and their opinions with consultations, it is a step further but we still cannot call it empowering participation if they do not have decision-making power. That would be tokenism. Meaningful and empowering citizen participation occurs when citizens partner with power-holders in decision-making by defending their interests, and when they enjoy the majority of the full power of decision-making. This top ladder of participa-

tion empowers citizens in the political life they live in (Arnstein 1969).

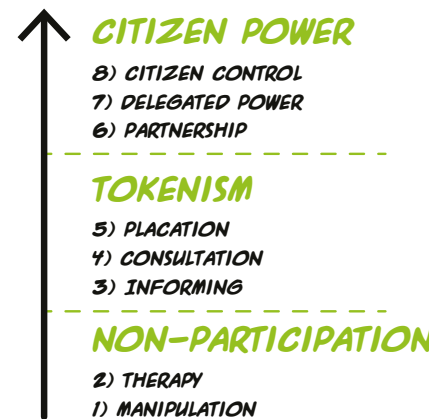


Table 1: Ladders of participation

### 2.2.1.2. Levels of participation

OECD (2001) identifies 3 levels of citizen participation; Information, Consultation and Active Participation.

**Information:** The government provides enough information for people to make informed decisions. This level does not allow for feedback or active participation and is the level at which the Right-To-Information act works. The demands of the people reach the government through media and pressure groups.

**Consultation:** This is seen as a two-way relationship in which citizens provide feedback to the government. It is based on the prior definition by government of the issue on which citizens views are being sought and requires the provision of information. Governments define the issue, set the questions (or ask for comments) and manage the process, while citizens are invited to contribute their views and opinions.

**Active Participation:** is regarded as a relationship based on partnership with the government, in which citizens actively engage in defining the process and content of policy-making. It acknowledges equal standing for citizens in defining the agenda, proposing policy options and shaping the policy dialogue. And, most importantly, it emphasises the collaborative setting of priorities and agendas.

4 In accordance to the on-line version.

This manual values the above levels; however, it adopts the participation levels as updated by the International Association for Public Participation<sup>5</sup> as:

*Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower.*

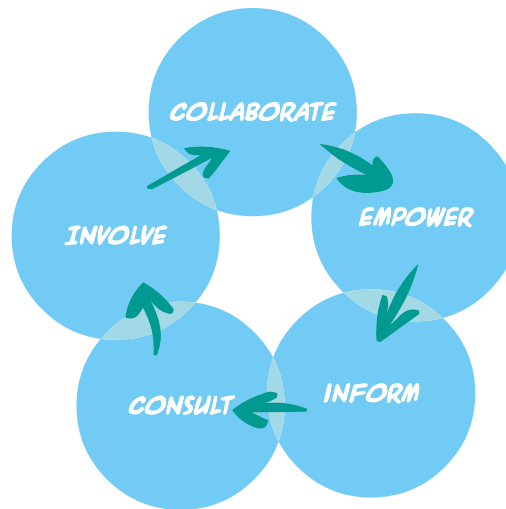
**Inform:** the goal is to provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions

**Consult:** the goal is to obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions

**Involve:** the goal is to work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered

**Collaborate:** the goal is to partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution

**Empower:** the goal is to place final decision-making in the hands of the public



**Full participation:** all participants have equal power and make a decision together.

**Broad and deep participation:** ordinary citizens have additional channels to voice their views in addition to voting and writing letters to representatives. They can have an influence on state strategies (Fung and Wright 2003).

#### 2.2.1.4. Characteristics of participation

The International Association of Public Participation (2011, online) emphasises the characteristics of participation as follows:

- Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- It includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision. It promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- It seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.

#### 2.2.1.3. Types of participation

In addition to these levels, there also are different types of participation depending on how much power citizens may hold. Pateman (1970,70-71) defines three types:

**Pseudo participation:** the aim is not providing participation but the feeling of participation used for persuasion rather than decision.

**Partial participation:** participants do not have equal power in making decisions. The inferior can only influence the superior who in the end makes the decision alone.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/IAP2%20Spectrum\\_vertical.pdf](http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf)

- It seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- It provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- It communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

#### 2.2.1.5. Participation tools for immigrants

Elections are the main participation process in representative democracies where the leadership seeks votes to become the representative power (Pateman 1970). While some immigrants have the right to vote, others may lack this civic right. In cases of absence of voting rights, there are other channels to participate in political life. As seen in the table below, immigrants who may not vote may participate in demonstrations or protests, they may contribute to consultations, they may join non-governmental organisations, and they may benefit from diplomacy.

extra-parliamentary avenue	demonstrations, protests and hunger strikes
consultative institutions	local and regional (national) level forums provide an opportunity to take part in local policy making, threat of conformism to current policies
industrial democracy	participation in trade unions and political parties
organizational avenue	pro-immigrant organisations and associations representing immigrants' interests, opportunity to take part in local and national policy making
diplomatic channel	country of origin's influence through diplomacy

*Table 2: Extra-electoral ways for immigrants to participate (in the absence of electoral rights)*

*Following Miller (1981), Zapata-Barrero (2002), and Davide Però (2005)*

#### 2.2.2. Participatory ICT and immigrants

While traditional ICT such as landline telephones and fax machines may still allow participation to a certain extent, the networked and interactive structure of new ICT enables more sophisticated dissemination of data and interaction between users in a potentially more participatory environment.

Web 2.0<sup>6</sup> applications and web-spaces emphasise and facilitate interaction, user generated content and data sharing. With the birth of Social Media such as blogs (Blogger, Wordpress), microblogs (Twitter, Tumblr), social networking sites (Facebook, Google+, tagged), photo and video sharing sites (Flickr, Youtube) and other environments of data sharing, interaction has reached a level of use where it cannot be ignored.

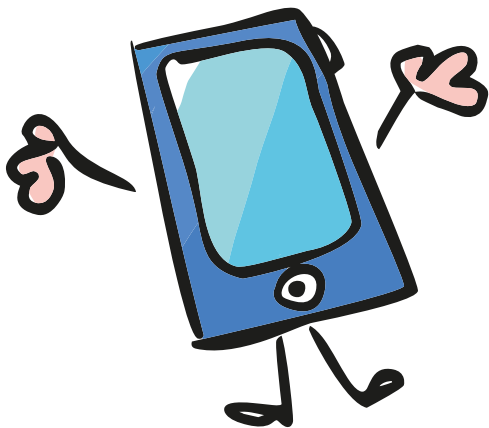
These CCT also provide participatory environments where users may participate not only by sharing their ideas, opinions, and knowledge, but also by developing new applications to further develop the

6 See O'reilly <http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html> for "core competencies of web 2.0 companies"



very online tool that they are using. User-generated content and applications are among the most attractive features of many social networking sites which reach millions of users.

Mobile technologies are becoming more attractive and more common than for instance personal computers. The International Telecommunication Union ITU reported in 2010 that there are 2 billion



Internet subscribers and 5.3 billion mobile phone subscriptions in the world (with 940 million 3G subscribers). Mobile technologies grant users individual access, interaction, and participation opportunities. The individuality of mobile technologies gives users decentralised access to information as well as the opportunity to disseminate information. This individual freedom of access to information and communication may be vital in cases of limitations and challenges immigrants may face at several levels. Mobile technologies also grant mobile collaboration opportunities, which are most helpful in e-participation processes for immigrants. Woodill (2010) argues that “Mobile collaboration is a relatively new phenomenon that will develop new methods and new technologies in the near future.”

### 2.2.3. e-participation

Broadly speaking, e-participation refers to the use of ICT to broaden and deepen political participation of citizens by enabling them to connect with one another and with their elected representatives and authorities. More narrowly, it refers to ICT-supported civic participation in the formal and informal processes of government and governance—pro-

cesses such as administration, governmental service design, and decision and policy making. The term has emerged partly as a response to citizen benefits and values which have drawn less attention than those of the service providers in e-government development, and partly as a consequence of the detachment of the roles of citizen and customer.

E-participation includes all stakeholders in democratic decision making processes—not merely top-down government initiatives. The complexity of e-participation processes results from the many spheres of participation, levels of engagement, stages of policy making, and stakeholders to be involved. Both public officials and private citizens and residents are involved in e-participation, with public officials having the responsibility of designing and operating processes to be as transparent and inclusive as possible, while the citizens’ and residents’ tasks are to actively participate in these processes.

Macintosh (2004) distinguishes three levels of e-participation:

*e-enabling: Supporting those who would not typically access the internet and take advantage of the large amount of information available. The objectives we are concerned with are how technology can be used to reach the wider audience by providing a range of technologies to cater for the diverse technical and communicative skills of citizens. The technology also needs to provide relevant information in a format that is both more accessible and more understandable. These two aspects of accessibility and understandability of information are addressed by e-enabling.*

*e-engaging: e-engaging with citizens is concerned with consulting a wider audience to enable deeper contributions and support deliberative debate on policy issues. The use of the term 'to engage' in this context refers to the top-down consultation of citizens by government or parliament.*

*e-empowering: e-empowering citizens is concerned with supporting active participation and facilitating bottom-up ideas to influence the political agenda. The previous top-down perspectives of democracy are characterized in terms of user access to information and reaction to government-led initiatives. From the bottom-up perspective, citizens are emerging as producers rather than just consumers of policy. Here there is the recognition that there is a need for allowing citizens to influence and participate in policy formulation.*

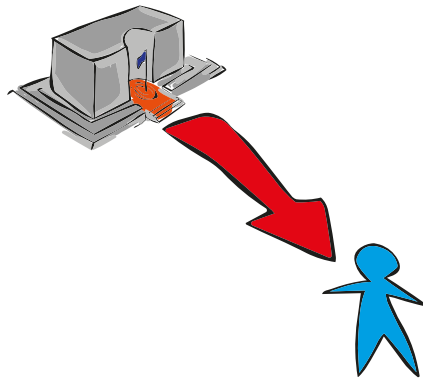
Dimension	Description
1. Level of participation	what level of detail, or how far to engage citizens
2. Stage in decision making	when to engage
3. Actors	who should be engaged and by whom
4. Technologies used	how and with what to engage citizens
5. Rules of engagement	what personal information will be needed/collected
6. Duration & sustainability	for what period of time
7. Accessibility	how many citizens participated and from where
8. Resources and Promotion	how much did it cost and how widely was it advertised
9. Evaluation and Outcomes	methodological approach and results
10. Critical factors for success	political, legal, cultural, economic, technological factors

Table 3: Dimensions of e-participation  
Reproduced from Macintosh (2004, 6)

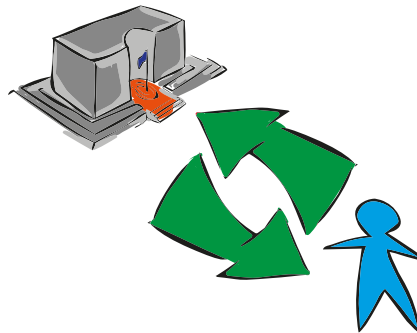
The participatory use of ICT by authorities depends on the overall e-governance model that they adopt. The categorisation below by Chadwick and May (2003) illustrates the differences and how setting up a website does not automatically mean e-participation.

### Models of e-governance

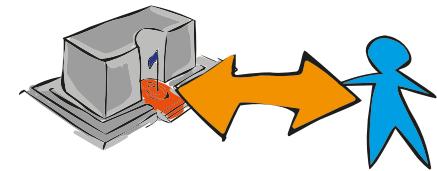
*(Adapted from Chadwick and May 2003, 277.)*



**Managerial:** 'service delivery' and policy presentation with efficient and faster delivery of government information and online transactions



**Consultative:** 'technical accuracy' and improved policy success rate with better policy provision to citizens and 'users' and e-voting and electronic input from voters and interest groups to government



**Participatory:** 'deliberation' participation and enhanced democracy with free speech and electronic media of civil society and autonomous pluralist mechanisms (e.g. discussion lists, Usenet, peer-to-peer technologies; increased political participation 'cyber civil society')

### 2.2.3.1. Spheres of e-participation

**Social e-participation in the political life:** may occur in different spheres with different ICT. Social e-participation, which in recent years has taken place primarily through social media, especially on social networking sites, may permit immigrants to access and interact with other groups in the society and have discussions on given social issues. Social media and the Internet created pressure to enhance representative democratic systems into more diversified and participatory forms. There has been a growing need to open the system for informal actions and initiatives started by individuals and occasional groupings in addition to fixed organisations and official institutions. Established forms of political participation are not the only way of exerting influence and having a say. This manual values social e-participation because it is a very good step for immigrants to begin to be included in society. This form of e-participation may also be political in content (Mouffe 2005) and will continue to be needed until immigrants obtains the legal status to further e-participate in decision-making.

**e-participation in politics:** This is another sphere. In representative democracies, the main method of participation is voting in elections. In the e-participation framework this corresponds to e-voting. This manual, however, emphasises empowerment with e-participation, and thus advocates the definition of participation by Arnstein (1969:1) "It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future." In order to attain empowerment, this manual approaches e-participation in politics as beyond e-voting and proposes longer term and regular e-participation practices to include immigrants in decision-making processes at the authority level.

**Top-down and bottom-up:** these processes may be a) top-down: e-participation initiated by the institutions/authorities that Coleman (2010) calls managed e-participation; b) bottom-up: e-participation which takes place in new forms, which Coleman (2010) calls autonomous e-participation.

Although authorities are the target audience for this manual, and thus it focuses on managed e-participation,

it also advises authorities on how to interact with autonomous e-participation in order to improve their overall e-governance.

### 2.2.4. Benefits of citizen inclusion by (e-) Participation

Why include citizens and associations in politics and political life? Citizen inclusion presents various benefits for authorities. Citizen participation enables more effective policy making with innovative, alternative, and creative solutions (Fung 2003). Moreover, the inclusion of the civil society in authorities' decision-making improves democracy:

- through the intrinsic value of associative life
- fostering civic virtues and teaching political skills
- offering resistance to power and checking government
- improving the quality and equality of representation
- facilitating public deliberation
- creating opportunities for citizens and groups to participate directly in governance (Fung 2006)

With regard to e-inclusion, it seeks to overcome barriers to ICT products and services which exclude people and create a new form of exclusion, digital exclusion. The development of e-Inclusion is an important aspect in building an inclusive Europe with greater social cohesion and mobility, highly participative democracies, better quality of life, and enhanced opportunities for employment and education.

### 2.2.5. High level challenges in e-participation

There are number of challenges and limitations in e-participation. The second part of this manual focuses on the obstacles of e-participation for immigrants in Estonia, Finland and Sweden. Before addressing these more specific types of challenges, this section explains the higher level challenges and limitations of e-participation on a more general basis.

#### 2.2.5.1. Representative democracy

Representative democracy allows citizens to choose who they want to represent their interests

in policy decision-making. While deliberative and participatory democracy models allow citizens to be involved in the decision-making process, in the representative democracy model elected representatives hold decision-making power and may disregard citizens' opinions and proposals.

#### 2.2.5.2. Digital divide

Many commentators discuss the digital divide in terms of access. Here we follow the same logic by seeing it as the unequal distribution of access to digital technology between various social groups. As van Dijk (2008, 289) suggests, access is a multi-dimensional issue not limited to its physical aspect. It is possible to identify four successive and cumulative kinds of access which an individual should overcome in the process of adopting digital technology:

**Motivation:** Disinterest or technophobia, which is a fear of all kinds of technologies and distrust in their beneficial effects, are significant barriers to digital technology among seniors, people with low educational levels, and a portion of the female population.

**Material access:** Many believe that the solution to the digital divide is reached as soon as everybody has a computer, an Internet connection, and/or other means to access digital technology. Yet this is not the case, because material access is only one part of a complex situation.

**Digital skills:** After finding the motivation and means to explore the digital world and acquiring a computer, or any other device, it is necessary to learn about them by doing several things. First, one should develop the capability to operate hardware and software. Second, one should acquire the skills to search, process, and evaluate information garnered from computer technology and network sources. Finally, one should develop the capability to reach particular goals using digital technology.

**Usage:** The use of digital technology is common place, a part of daily life. This is the final stage and ultimate goal of the process of appropriating technology in order to have holistic access to digital technologies.

**Digital exclusion:** Factors as contributors to digital exclusion by the Scottish Executive (2001).

Perceived or Actual Costs	Perceived or actual cost of PCs and other equipment Perceived or actual cost of Web-related phone calls
Access	Lack of near-by/affordable facilities providing public access to the Web/ICTs Lack of work-related access to ICTs and the Web to build skills and awareness
Skills	Lack of literacy and numeracy skill
Lack of ICT skills	Lack of knowledge/appreciation of the information and services which can be found on the Web
Cultural Issues	Lack of a critical mass of other Web/PC users among community/family/friends Cultural barriers
Personal Factors	Lack of confidence Lack of credit card/bank account Fear of technology A feeling that it is too late in life to learn about new technologies No interest in the Internet Physical difficulties such as poor eyesight or manual dexterity and coordination

### 2.2.5.3. Political elite

The political elite who hold decision-making power may present a challenge to e-participation. Chadwick and May (2003) argue that the lack of integration of ICT in participation and the lack of participatory e-governance is not due to the digital divide but to the political elite and the current democracy. As discussed above, information and communication technologies are only the facilitators in the e-partic-

ipation process; what is crucial is that the political culture and the political elite be reorganised to allow citizens (and residents) to be included in decision-making processes.

### 2.2.5.4. Different definitions and misconceptions

Different countries and cultures may perceive e-participation differently (IA2P 2009). A common

misconception, for instance, is that a public website providing access to information and public services, and interaction with officials, equals e-participation. Access and interaction, however, while they are prerequisites for the process, do not constitute participation; they are the steps to reach participation (Carpentier 2011).

Another prerequisite for participation is engagement. Engagement is about aiming either at solving community problems through civic engagement or at influencing institutional politics as political engagement. Engagement is also a prerequisite for participation but it is not participation (Dahlgren 2009).

Another misconception is that providing online participatory tools is enough for e-participation. It is not. OECD (2003: 1) emphasises that “Technology is an enabler not the solution. Integration with traditional, “offline” tools for access to information, consultation and public participation in policy-making is needed to make the most of ICTs”. Online tools provided by authorities permit e-participation as long as they are used by citizens to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes.

#### 2.2.5.5. E-participation challenges for immigrants

Apart from the above challenges that apply to everyone in society, immigrants face additional challenges.

**Integration vs segregation:** Immigrants may form an even more vulnerable group in society in terms of e-participation. The process of integration into the new society's institutions and relationships is a challenge. Learning a new social structure, in a different language and in a different culture may be a great challenge for some immigrant groups<sup>7</sup>. The European Union's report "Integration of migrants: Contribution of local and regional authorities" (2006)<sup>8</sup> argues that integration is not the only possible outcome. Instead, the reproduction of ethnic identity and integration into an ethnic colony can result in social segregation from the majority culture, in segmented

integration into a subculture—typically an urban underclass, or in marginalisation from both the host society and the ethnic colony.

**Top-down integration policies:** The same report also argues that integration policies are often designed in a top-down manner, in which experts assume that the immigrant population has certain needs, and, accordingly, applies certain measures. This approach will, however, fail if it does not take into account migrants as actors, and their specific goals, needs, motivations, competencies and/or problems. "Immigrants" here refers to both individuals and to immigrant organisations, which participate in the design and implementation of measures.

Beyond formal political representation, however, citizenship also requires other forms of involvement in civil society. The participation of immigrants in local associations (such as sports clubs), and the opening of those associations to immigrants is one way in which this can come about.

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<sup>7</sup> see Lockwood (1964) for system and social integration; Esser (2000) for acculturation, placement, interaction, and identification; and Heckmann and Schnapper (2003) for structural, cultural, interactive, identificational integration.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2006/22/en/1/ef0622en.pdf>

## CHAPTER 3

# Contextual background on e-participation

The increasing use of ICT also increases expectations that the public sector will apply these new technologies in daily work routines, inclusion policies and practices. Expectations about integration of new information and communication technologies into practices in the public sector, particularly when taking into account the inclusion of citizens/residents in decision-making processes, also apply to information society strategies at the national, regional and international levels.

This chapter presents the processes and policies of inclusion and e-participation starting at the global level and then focusing on three neighbouring countries—Estonia, Finland and Sweden.

### 3.1. International context of e-participation

#### 3.1.1. International trends and policies

The United Nations organised the World Summit on Information Society at the beginning of the millennium to globally set principles of information society

and to draft an action plan<sup>1</sup>. The declaration of the principles states: “Governments, as well as private sector, civil society and the United Nations and other international organizations have an important role and responsibility in the development of the Information Society and, as appropriate, in decision-making processes. Building a people-centred Information Society is a joint effort which requires cooperation and partnership among all stakeholders.” Estonia, Finland and Sweden have all signed the above mentioned declaration<sup>2</sup>.

The globally set principles also emphasise some concepts which are at the core of this manual, namely migrants and inclusion. Principle number 13 of the declaration of principles emphasises migrants: “In building the Information Society, we shall pay particular attention to the special needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups of society, including migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees, unemployed and underprivileged people,

*minorities and nomadic people. We shall also recognize the special needs of older persons and persons with disabilities.”*

Principle number 17 emphasises inclusion: “We recognize that building an inclusive Information Society requires new forms of solidarity, partnership and cooperation among governments and other stakeholders, i.e. the private sector, civil society and international organizations. Realizing that the ambitious goal of this Declaration—bridging the digital divide and ensuring harmonious, fair and equitable development for all—will require strong commitment by all stakeholders, we call for digital solidarity, both at national and international levels.”

Apart from the WSIS process and its principles, the UN constantly develops definitions and formulates expectations for authorities regarding e-participation. The current highest level of e-government is referred to as “connected,” and it emphasises citizen participation:

*“Connected: Government websites have changed the way governments communicate with their citizens. They are proactive in requesting information and opinions from the citizens using Web 2.0 and*

1 see the principles and the action plan and the full information available on the summit at <http://www.itu.int/wsisis>

2 see the national e-strategies of the three countries in the framework of WSIS at [http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/cyb/app/docs/National\\_e\\_strategies\\_for\\_development\\_2010.pdf](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/cyb/app/docs/National_e_strategies_for_development_2010.pdf)



other interactive tools. E-services and e-solutions cut across the departments and ministries in a seamless manner. Information, data and knowledge is transferred from government agencies through integrated applications. Governments have moved from a government-centric to a citizen-centric approach, where e-services are targeted to citizens through life cycle events and segmented groups to provide tailor-made services. Governments create an environment that empowers citizens to be more

involved with government activities to have a voice in decision-making” (UN 2010)<sup>3</sup>.

The UN also states that e-participation is beyond e-voting: “e-participation changes the dynamics between government and citizens. Web 2.0 and social networking tools have created an environment that politicians and decision-makers must adjust to and incorporate in their daily work. In the United States,

3 UNPAN (United Nations Public Administration Network) and ASPA (American Society of Public Administration) (2008) propose the following tools for e-participation: comments or feedback, newsletter, online bulletin-board or chat capabilities, online discussion forum on policy issues, scheduled e-meetings for discussion, online survey/polls, synchronous video, citizen satisfaction survey, online decision-making. This list obviously needs to be developed further according to new expectations as well as new ICT applications.

for example, more than 2 million followers subscribe to the Twitter feed of President Barack Obama” (UN 2010).

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has grouped inclusion activities into five stages of inclusion (see table below), noting that the first real step toward any inclusive activity is providing the public with all necessary information. Thereafter, each consecutive step allows the public to become more involved until the final stage of empowerment is reached, in which decision-making is entirely entrusted to the public and its self-governed representative bodies.

IAP2 Spectrum for Public Participation Ways for participation (2007):

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
<b>Public participation goal</b>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public

It must be kept in mind that every subsequent manner of participation is deeper than the previous one, and a precondition for reaching each of them is that the preceding ones have been completed (EIH).

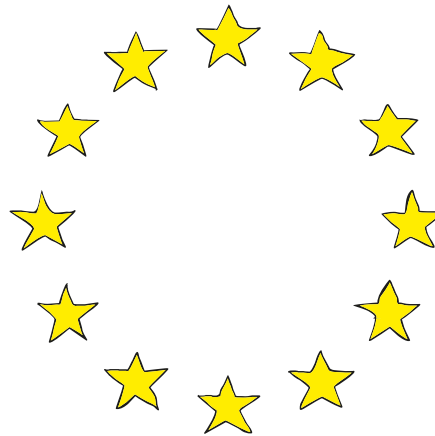
### 3.1.2 The initiatives of European Union bodies

On the website of the European Commission Information Society, in the section “ICT for Government and Public Services” it is stated that e-participation is about reconnecting ordinary people with politics and policy-making, and making the decision-making processes easier to understand and follow through the use of new Information and Communication Technologies<sup>4</sup>.

In 2001, the European Commission issued a White Paper on European Governance. (European Commission, European Governance, a White Paper, COM (2001) 428.) The European Commission has also launched a website called Your Voice in Europe, which is the “single access point” to a wide variety of consultations, discussions and other tools

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<sup>4</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/egovernment/policy/participation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/egovernment/policy/participation/index_en.htm)



which enable people participate in the European policy-making process<sup>5</sup>.

The eParticipation Preparatory Action was initiated by the European Parliament in 2006. Through a set of experiments in real environments, the action promotes the use of ICT in legislative and decision-making processes at local, regional, national and EU levels. The projects use new digital technologies to improve the drafting of legislative texts in order to provide citizens with easier access to information

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<sup>5</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/index_en.htm)

about proposed legislation, and to give them tools to express their opinions.

The reader is also encouraged to become familiar with the European Digital Agenda<sup>6</sup> to understand the general situation in Europe and the European Commission's e-government action plan.<sup>7</sup>

## 3.2. The Processes of inclusion and participation

### 3.2.1 Inclusion and participation as a two-way process

The inclusion and participation process can be viewed from two perspectives. From one, there may be an expectation that authorities, when initiating a decision or legal draft-making process, will also think of possible ways to include citizens from the outset, design an inclusion plan, and take the lead in management of the process.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/digital-agenda/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/index_en.htm)

<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/egovernment/action\\_plan\\_2011\\_2015/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/egovernment/action_plan_2011_2015/index_en.htm). For best cases of e-participation in Europe, see <http://www.epractice.eu/community/eParticipation>

From another perspective, citizens themselves may demonstrate a need for a change in in either administrative practises or legal regulations. In such cases, the issue brought up by the public needs to be considered seriously and an initial plan should be drafted to find a cooperative plan to solve the problematic situation.

It could be even said that it would be desirable to start talking about participation facilitation, instead of inclusion activities. The emphasis could be shifted more and more towards providing the public with ways to participate whenever there is interest, instead of setting limits on the includer's side of the process.

*Engaging with civil society as an equal partner requires public officials to have courage, humility and a level of trust in the public participation process (IAPP 2009).*

*When governments respect civil society and allow it to flourish, citizens become inspired and motivated to become involved in public participation (IAPP 2009).*

*Failure to give feedback after a p2 (public participation) process may actually damage the functioning of democracy by depleting trust (IAPP 2009).*

*The barriers to greater online citizen engagement in policy-making are cultural, organisational and constitutional not technological. Overcoming these challenges will require greater efforts to raise awareness and capacity both within governments and among citizens (OECD 2003).*

### 3.2.2. Users and roles in participation

Process users/participants vary case by case. They are typically various authorities/public servants, NGOs and their representatives, businesses and individuals.

Key roles or types of participants are:

- initiator (organisations, individuals, draftsmen) —the one starting the inclusion or participation/inclusion process
- participants (stakeholders, target groups, invited experts, coordinators)—those participating in the legal draft development process

The draftsman (or initiation) is responsible for the inclusion project and participation related to it. The draftsman plans and guides the process flow (events) and is responsible for publishing information and artifacts related to the project and participation in it.

Note that the draftsman can be any individual (or organisation). While the draftsman is often an authority, it may also represent a public authority, an NGO, or a group of individuals. A draftsman can also be “an individual”. (As an example, citizens making initiatives, activists, etc.—even they could be considered draftsmen, when making, for example, a written petition, or “physical petition,” a demonstration).

Stakeholders participate during various phases of the process. The stakeholders can include NGOs, other public agencies/authorities, citizens/individuals or businesses.

### 3.2.3 Steps of inclusion

The lifecycle of any decision—be it an area-specific development plan, a legal act, an organisational activity plan, etc.—can be divided into stages:

- identifying the problem and determining the objective;
- gathering information and estimating impacts;
- proposing, deciding on and implementing solutions;
- analysis and follow-up assessment of impacts.

The latter in turn helps identification of new problems and formulation of new objectives.

Inclusion can and must be implemented at all of these stages – the earlier inclusion begins, the better able participants are to understand the on-going process and the more substantively they can contribute. (Hinsberg 2009)

The success of inclusion largely depends on the willingness of the including party to go a little further in its work than required by law, job description or specific work tasks. In practice, this may mean very basic things – for instance, a telephone call to a partner, taking interest in whether the partner has

received and understands the materials and is able to respond on time, a more clearly worded letter, etc. (Hinsberg 2009)

Typically, participation is related to a “project” which an authority is responsible for. The participation related to the project may be mandatory (as in the case of drafting laws or urban planning) or it may be a voluntary effort to get better results. The draftsman is responsible for the planning of participation.

**The steps of inclusion can be defined in the following steps:**

Planning phase	
STEP 1	Formulate the objective of inclusion
STEP 2	Identify the participants and communication means
STEP 3	Prepare a detailed inclusion plan and resources
Execution phase	
STEP 4	Call for participation and ensure a working dialogue and communication
STEP 5	Execute the inclusion plan
Results and feedback phase	
STEP 6	Communicate results
STEP 7	Follow-up and assessment

#### STEP 1 Formulate the objective of inclusion

Formulate, in a clear and simple manner, the problem you are going to focus on and the objective of inclusion as well as the expected result and the anticipated impacts of consultations and decisions.

Other interest groups or organisations, and even individuals, may propose their own suggestions for inclusive activities and goals. Therefore, prospective target groups or stakeholders should also be included in formulating the inclusion objective.

**Task:** Defining the goals of participation.

**Description:** Aim for concrete, measurable results, if possible.

The goals may be related to for example:

- schedule of participatory activities
- stakeholders and target groups (how many, who, at what stage)
- artifacts of participation (applied and produced)
- participation “management”
- suitable participation methods

Try to make sure the goals are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely).

Outcome: Participation goals/targets as a part of the participation plan.

#### STEP 2 Identify the participants and communication means

Prepare a list of parties to be included. Think through who would be impacted by the planned decision and what that impact would be, and take into consideration their wishes, needs and specific characteristics.

Determine who needs to be included and in which stage of the project.

Include participants in the development of a draft as early as possible and throughout the process.

Establish contacts and communication channels and methods.

**Task:** Defining and finding participants.

**Description:** Define the initial (ideal) participants you would like to include.

Search for other similar projects – you might be able to reuse some experiences or plans from them.

Plan how and when you will reach the known participants and *how you can find other potential stakeholders you might not yet know about*.

Outcome: list of target stakeholders.

#### STEP 3 Prepare a detailed inclusion plan and resources

Once you know the objective, and the participants and their interests, needs and possibilities, choose the most appropriate methods of inclusion and prepare and publish the inclusion time schedule: what takes place when (see Estonian Inclusion Manual, Chapters 4, 6 and 7).

When preparing a budget for the specific inclusion case, think through what skills will be needed to carry out the plans and whether some services should be outsourced. How much time is needed?

How much will it cost to use selected methods? What kind of facilities and technical resources will be needed? Will it be necessary to carry out preliminary research, conduct surveys, prepare publications, etc.? Also, plan how to manage various activities in the inclusion process (such as facilitation, artifacts, publishing, communications, etc.).

There are several sources on the web for various inclusion methods to consider. Here is a list of possible inclusion methods described by *Involve*, a UK expert group on public engagement, on their site [peopleandparticipation.net](http://peopleandparticipation.net)<sup>8</sup>.

For Estonia-specific methods and guides, see also:

Chapter 7 of the "Kaasamise Käsiraamat ametnikele ja vabäühendustele"<sup>9</sup> (approx. Inclusion Handbook for civil servants and NGOs) in Estonian.

Remember to give the stakeholder groups a chance to influence/participate in creating the inclusion plan.

Example tasks in Step 3	Description
Select participation methods and evaluate	Define what participation methods will be used with each stakeholder group, and what kind of financial and personnel resources will be needed.
Costs	Make sure you are using a justified set of methods, taking into account the needs of various stakeholders.  Outcome: stakeholder groups and associated participation methods are defined and described in the participation plan.
Scheduling	Schedule all the phases of the process, indicating who is participating, when and how.  Outcome: schedule, refined participation plan.
Planning of participation activities	Plan all participation activities and events. Outcome: Participation events have been defined and depicted, refined participation plan.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.peopleandparticipation.net/display/Methods/browse+methods>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.osale.ee/?id=150>

#### STEP 4 Call for participation and ensure a working dialogue and communication

Communicate with the participants in an appropriate manner, taking into consideration language and channels which will enable them to be informed and understand the on-going process, in order to have their say. Ensure that the public, the stakeholders and the parties possibly impacted by the inclusion project are notified.

There are several examples of how to facilitate communication and reach hard-to-reach groups using the Internet, as presented in the Chapter 4.

#### STEP 5 Execute the inclusion plan

During the actual implementation phase, actual participation is taking place.

In addition, there are a number of continuous tasks, including

- managing the process
- dealing with PR and keeping up continuous communication with participants

- publishing interim summaries
- inviting comments and feedback

**Task:** Executing the inclusion plan and facilitating participation

**Description:** During the process, stakeholders may be invited to contribute/participate in many different ways, as stated in the inclusion plan.

Typical inclusion activities include the following:

Writing:

- online/collaboratively on documents/artifacts
- personal/organisation-specific written documents

Discussion (for example chats or web discussion forums)

- discussion of predefined subjects
- discussion of ad-hoc subjects

Commenting:

- commenting collaborative work
- commenting project artifacts
- formal document commenting

Polls/questionnaires/surveys:

- to all stakeholders
- to chosen stakeholders
- open to all

Meetings:

- with one or several stakeholders

Negotiations:

- with one or several stakeholders, about particular issues
- consultation request during participation or at the end of the process

**Results:**

Artifacts from the participation. If needed, a formal request for comments/consultation.

**Feedback about the process:** In the case of long-term work, interim summaries are important in order to analyse the activities already performed and to introduce changes if necessary. Draw up an interim summary of the feedback received in the course of inclusion, adjust the details of activities and notify participants of the interim summary.

The draftsman asks for feedback from all participants.

### Results:

Feedback request, see also feedback results in next phase.

You may want to utilise some of the tools from Chapter 5 *Toolbox*, or [supportingdiversity.eu](http://supportingdiversity.eu).

#### STEP 6 Communicate results

Communicate the results to all the participants, stakeholders and target groups.

Publish an aggregate reply, which contains all the proposals and comments received, with justifications. Notify the included participants of the results of the inclusion. Also, publish all individual outcomes of the participation (outputs/outcomes/artifacts).

If available at this time, publish information about the actual impacts of the participation (e.g., decisions made by authorities, along with justifications). If not available, *publish information about next actions*.

#### STEP 7 Follow-up and assessment

Assess the level of success of inclusion and your own work as the including party.

Also collect feedback from the participants.

**Task:** Gathering and evaluating the participation artifacts and activity.

**Description:** The draftsman evaluates the inclusion process, in the light of the goals stated (internal evaluation). Lessons learned are recorded for future reference and internal training purposes. A report about the participation should include the plan and key indicators about participation (who, activity, etc.)

To provide an external evaluation, the draftsman may also collect feedback from the target groups (those who participated, but also, if possible, those who did not actively participate) regarding:

- satisfaction about the participation process,
- implications of the delivered outcome (legal document, development plan, etc.)

Feedback collection may take place over a period of time. A summary of feedback is then formulated.

Outcome: overview/summary of participation (actual results), stakeholder specific feedback, participation report.

**Task:** Replying to feedback from participants (and other stakeholders)

**Description:** Replies are given to interested individuals and groups regarding the feedback collected.

Outcome: individual or group specific feedback.

**Task:** Publishing participation feedback

**Description:** Publish the participation feedback transparently and summarize both successes and failures

Outcome: published participation feedback summary.



### 3.2.4 Process charts and inclusion plans: Examples and further details

For more detailed examples and process charts based on the work of various Finnish authorities during the spring of 2011, please see the website [supportingdiversity.eu](http://supportingdiversity.eu). Examples of participation/inclusion plans are also available on the site. Examples of tools that allow inclusion plan development and tools for their execution are the Finnish e-participation environment and the Estonian Osale ([www.osale.ee](http://www.osale.ee)).

The Finnish e-participation environment project develops web services for enhancing and enabling dialog and interaction between citizens, politicians and public servants. The services provide tools and methods for, e.g., inclusion planning, deliberative discussions, different kinds of online discussions, questionnaires and surveys, formal commenting of drafts and municipal and national initiatives. The services are introduced in phases, mainly between mid-2012 and 2013, and can be used on a local, regional and national level. The project blog: [www.osallistumisymparisto.fi](http://www.osallistumisymparisto.fi), services to be published at [www.otakantaa.fi](http://www.otakantaa.fi).

For practical steps of inclusion ministries prepare and publish their work plans for inclusion in the participatory web ([www.osale.ee](http://www.osale.ee)), as well as on the ministries' web-sites. Work plans provide information about the decisions and legislation to be prepared, and how the interest groups could participate in the process.

## CHAPTER 4

## Coping with obstacles to e-participation

**This chapter identifies obstacles to e-participation among linguistic and cultural minorities in Estonia, Finland and Sweden, and provides advice about how to potentially cope with the issues in order to improve e-participation of immigrants. An analysis of all the issues gathered in the research process through workshops, interviews, and observations suggests that challenges and limitations occur in four main areas:**

**Access:** Access refers to the means to enter into, contact, and communicate with systems, people, and organisations. Access to ICT, information, and people is crucial for e-participation. The challenges in this area include language issues, availability of ICT tools and motivation to use them, ability to contact relevant people and organisations and to find needed information.

**Interaction:** is a reciprocal action or influence. On-line interaction between authorities and citizens/residents is a prerequisite for e-participation. The issues which challenge e-participation in this area include ICT skills, communication and negotiation skills and social isolation.

**Cultural/political culture differences:** Democracy is a political arrangement with distinctive local practices. Not surprisingly, different countries have different ways to conceive of, arrange, and practice e-participation. By the same token, all countries differ in their political culture; that is, in the practices and customs related to their political systems. These two conditions of different democratic systems and political cultures underlie the complex process of including people from different cultural backgrounds, for the simple reason that something commonly understood in one culture might be completely unknown in another.

**Technical/management:** The technical/management category refers to all the issues and limitations which challenge the process of designing, arranging, and implementing e-participation as well as the issues related to the rationale for participation in the first place.

This chapter proposes advice that can help authorities overcome several challenges which they may face when reaching out to the immigrant population in the society during the inclusion process. The chapter presents advice systematically, in accordance with the issues found throughout the underlying research.

The following advice is intentionally presented first at a somewhat abstract level, followed by more detailed explanations which answer the questions “What?” and “How?” Also, inspiring cases might be presented alongside the recommendations.

“What?” and “How?” naturally vary depending on the conditions of each institution. The advice below about actions is but one way of approaching the matter; many more actions may help the authorities to reach the overall goal of coping with challenges and limitations. Readers of this chapter will benefit most from these abstract and concrete levels of advice when applying them as best suited, considering the framework of each specific institution.

The advice below also varies in feasibility. While some suggestions can be implemented in a somewhat shorter time with a moderately small effort such as introducing video formats on the website, others may require more resources and perhaps be linked with various administrative processes, such as staff training and management guidelines. Thus the various suggestions enable readers to make their own priority lists in planning and implementing their e-participation strategies and policies.

## Overview of obstacles

Challenge areas	Typical obstacles		
<b>Access</b> <i>to and from the authorities</i>	<i>lack of, inefficiency in, differences in</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>language</li> <li>skills</li> <li>usability and access to e-services</li> <li>access to people</li> <li>access to information / knowledge sharing</li> </ul>	<b>Cultural / Political</b> <b>Cultural differences</b> <i>between the authorities and immigrants</i>	<i>differences in</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communication</li> <li>democracy</li> <li>perceptions, interpretations, assumptions</li> </ul>
			<i>and presence of</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conservatism</li> <li>inclusion</li> </ul>
<b>Interaction</b> <i>between authorities and immigrants</i>	<i>lack of</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communication</li> <li>democracy</li> <li>perceptions, interpretations, assumptions</li> </ul>	<b>Technical/ management</b> <i>in the authorities and immigrants level</i>	<i>lack of, inefficiency in,</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>skills</li> <li>resources</li> </ul>
	<i>and presence of</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conservatism</li> <li>inclusion</li> </ul>		<i>a presence of</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>old habits/old networks</li> <li>arbitrariness</li> </ul>

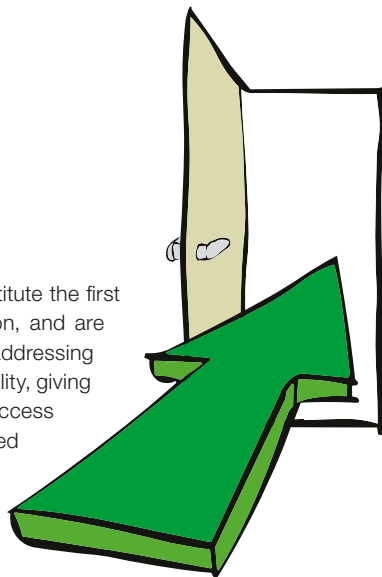
### Primary challenge areas in the inclusion process

All the issues listed below challenge and limit each and every step of the e-inclusion process in some way or another. The table on the right gives an overview of the two main areas of challenge, in each steps in the inclusion process.

Inclusion steps	Access	Interaction	Cultural/ Political Culture	Technical/ Management
Prepare a detailed inclusion plan and resources			*	*
Call for participation and ensure a working dialogue and communication		*		*
Execute the inclusion plan	*		*	
Communicate results	*			*
Follow-up and assessment			*	*

## 4.1. Access

Obstacles in the access area constitute the first category of issues in e-participation, and are related to lack or inefficiency in addressing differences in language, skills, usability, giving and receiving feedback as well as access to people, information and shared knowledge.



### 4.1.1. Limitations and differences in language

#### Language and channels of communication:

There are several aspects related to language and ways of communication which may create obstacles for wider inclusion and participation.

For example: when initiating an inclusion process, civil servants may be unaware of the need for communication in multiple languages for addressing immigrants and people from various language backgrounds.

Advice	Be accessible in different languages.
What	Recognizing the need to communicate in multiple languages will enable reaching people from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
How	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Provide media releases, announcements, etc. in multiple languages. When translation is not possible, provide links to automatic web-based translation tools along with your message. Although these tools still do not offer fully correct translation, they help the reader gain an overall understanding of the content.</li><li>2. Provide automatic web-based translation tools on your organisation's website.</li><li>3. When drafting the inclusion plan, add the necessary steps for translation or integration of automatic web-based translation means in the process.</li></ol>
Get inspired	The City of Toronto has a translation toolbar added to the city's website, enabling the reader to choose 51 different languages: <a href="http://www.toronto.ca">www.toronto.ca</a> The website of the City of Odense evokes a translation toolbar above the web content: <a href="http://oplev.odense.dk">oplev.odense.dk</a>
See also	Chapter 5 <i>Toolbox</i>

Authorities need to take into account that people usually prefer to receive news and information in the language which is most comfortable for them, and generally not in another language. This will determine which news and media channels they choose as their primary information sources, which in turn may lead to a situation in which civil servants and various national or multinational communities explore and follow media spheres and channels which differ from each other. They may not receive or accidentally stumble upon essential information or announcements about participation opportunities by following the news and media channels in other languages. The same difficulties may appear when searching for information using right keywords or phrases in another language.



*“#üepro “3” empirical study show that immigrants follow international news more often than the Finnish media. Language is the big barrier.*

@Fevenc

Advice	Publish invitations to participate through various language media channels.
What	To facilitate receiving information by those not following the media channels in the main state language, and to forward information to as wide an audience as possible.
How	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seek out the Internet portals and social media networks which are popular among and followed by multicultural or other nationality groups.</li> <li>2. Allow sharing your website content through social media networks, so that individuals and communities can inform their own communities about published announcements and content.</li> <li>3. Add information sharing widgets to your website, which provide automatically updated news and information.</li> </ol>
Get inspired	Invitation from city of Helsinki, Vantaa and Espoo published on multicultural web portal Monimos.fi in Finland.
See also	Chapter 5 <i>Toolbox</i>

### Mismatching translation:

The next area of concern is the reliability of the existing translated information on websites. The translated versions may represent only a summary or a portion of the content presented in the original language, leaving visitors to the multi-language website unaware that the translated pages may not contain the original amount and quality of content.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>In case of partially translated information, insert a disclaimer regarding the quantity and coverage of translated text.</b>
<b>What</b>	The partially translated content may give people who are using the translated pages as their major source of information a misleading impression and understanding of the web source because they might not realize that not everything is translated and/or believe that the web source does not contain the needed information.
<b>How</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide indicators or explanations about the extent to which the information on the site is translated, and which portions are missing or only summarized rather than providing the full text. Provide links to the full original text along with the translations.</li> <li>2. Provide the date of the last update. This will help the reader to further clarify whether the translated text is up to date.</li> <li>3. Integrate a free automatic translation toolbar to your organisation's website, or provide links to other translation tools and options (see Section: "Translation Tools").</li> </ol>
<b>See also</b>	Chapter 5 <i>Toolbox</i>

### Legal/technical language:

The legal and technical language used by civil servants often differs from "everyday language", and might therefore be difficult to understand. Difficulties in understanding grow when the legal language is not a person's mother tongue or preferred language of communication. These issues may discourage certain groups of people (youths, immigrants, less educated, medically impaired, etc.) to approach authorities. In such cases, translation of the original legal or bureaucratic text will not succeed without the skills of a professional translator.



“*#iieppro 3 google translate (with for example chrome) can be very useful when you notice the same information is not available in English!*”

@nietweinig

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Present informative messages or summaries of more sophisticated legal texts in everyday language.</b>
<b>What</b>	People not fluent in the official language may be discouraged or misled by misinterpreting the legally correct but hard to comprehend information. This also results in lower trust in the information provider, who is “talking smart” and not paying attention to the needs of its audience.
<b>How</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When addressing the public, implement plain language in your communication activities.</li> <li>2. In case of more sophisticated documents or texts, present a summary in simple language in addition to the full legal text, indicating in the summary which portion of the text is legally binding in case of doubt.</li> <li>3. People from other language backgrounds may actually prefer plain and simple presentation of the information in the official language instead of sophisticated legal text translated into other languages.</li> </ol>
<b>Get inspired</b>	Selkokeskus <a href="http://papunet.net/selkokeskus/in-english.html">http://papunet.net/selkokeskus/in-english.html</a>

### Knowledge of language specifics:

The lower level of knowledge and comprehension of a certain language and its grammar may also keep people from searching and finding correct information otherwise available on the web. Web addresses may not be intuitive for non-native speakers.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Consider registering typical misspelled versions of the original domain names.</b>
<b>What</b>	For example, in Estonia some websites use words containing double-vowels (like <a href="http://www.eesti.ee">www.eesti.ee</a> ), which may be unknown to people not familiar with Estonian grammar. Therefore it may be easy to misspell when typing the address or searching for it in the web. A misspelled web address may also lead the user to a website owned by a cybersquatter instead of to the intended public site.
<b>How</b>	Register the misspelled versions of the original domain name, and redirect people to the correct domain address, pointing out the actual correct address.
<b>Get inspired</b>	Many business sites have also registered typically misspelled versions of their website URLs, and redirect their website users to the actual site. Example: Typing incorrect site addresses like <a href="http://www.luftansa.com">www.luftansa.com</a> or <a href="http://www.luthansa.com">www.luthansa.com</a> , the user is redirected to the correct address <a href="http://www.lufthansa.com">www.lufthansa.com</a>

Often information is advertised by publishing a website address and inviting people to visit the site for more information. In such cases it becomes important how considerably the website’s domain name has been chosen and whether it is easy to remember and search for.



Advice	Consider and test the recognisability of a domain address.
<b>What</b>	Difficulties in finding the desired website arise when web addresses contain words or abbreviations which might be well known in the main culture, but not necessarily among non-native speakers.
<b>How</b>	Before deciding on a new domain address for a public service or website, test the recognisability and familiarity of the words used by various linguistic and cultural communities in the society. Such a test will also reveal the possible spelling mistakes, confusing words or abbreviations which may hinder the search and successful discovery of the new website.

#### 4.1.2. Lack of ICT skills

People have different existing skills with using ICT tools, and also varying understanding of the usefulness of Internet services and modern communication tools. Some people may also be by nature less interested in communication and socialising, and therefore not keen on acquiring ICT tools or skills. Such a lack of interest or understanding of the Internet and social media tools may be a reason for modest (or even absent) digital skills. Additionally, ICT courses, on the other hand, are not always available for persons with an average level of language skills.

Advice	Provide web tutorials in video format to support the use and adoption of web services.
<b>What</b>	People have varying skills and experience with using ICT tools. Some of the people with modest ICT skills are also doubtful about the usefulness of Internet services and modern communication tools.
<b>How</b>	Easily followed web tutorials, in video or simple graphic formats, could be added to the participatory and e-service sites to help users overcome obstacles related to language, ICT skills and cultural communication.
<b>Get inspired</b>	Video tutorials for helping people install Estonian ID-card software and provide digital signatures: <a href="http://www.id.ee/koolitus">http://www.id.ee/koolitus</a>

Habits of communication and skill in using ICT tools may determine the access to information and opportunities otherwise directed at the society overall.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Publish information through multiple modes and channels and encourage delivering individual messages.</b>
<b>What</b>	Some people are less interested in communication and socialising, and therefore not keen on acquiring ICT tools or skills. For example, they might be limited to a mobile phone for calls and perhaps messaging.
<b>How</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Publish information through multiple modes—web channels, regular audio, visual and written media channels, as well as through face-to-face meetings, in order to connect with people who have different levels of ICT skills.</li> <li>2. Continuously keep in mind how to reach people who do not use ICT tools. Spokespersons and representatives of different communities could be invited to deliver information published on the web in other forms to people who are not very Internet savvy or who have a lower level of ICT skills.</li> <li>3. Spokespersons could also pass the messages on to others by forwarding emails, posting news on their community's website and sending SMS's.</li> </ol>

### 4.1.3. Usability and e-services

#### Technical incompatibilities:

Barriers to inclusion may arise from technical incompatibilities and restrictions caused by various software and hardware, as well as by modes and channels through which the messages are published and interaction is carried out. In some cases, lack of a bank account, social security number, or similar unsatisfied prerequisites becomes an obstacle in obtaining a digital ID or access to a number of Internet services.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Provide web-based services and content accessible and fully readable by automatic web content translation and automatic synthesising tools.</b>
<b>What</b>	Sometimes web services are designed to operate properly with only specific web browsers, making them inaccessible to users of other software. Some content elements (graphics, widgets, etc.) may not be fully accessible for those using automatic translation tools or web content reading aids.
<b>How</b>	Make websites and services accessible with different popular web browsers, especially those enabling automatic translation (Google Chrome). Make sure that all parts of the website are accessible for reading aids in a text format. Supply graphic elements with explanatory texts.

Also, poor usability of e-services and/or information overload on websites cause difficulties for user groups with lower levels of language or ICT skills, as well as for people with impairments.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Use visually clear and distinguishably structured information layouts when managing web-sites.</b>
<b>What</b>	Poorly structured websites are hard to follow and use even for native speakers, let alone people not fluent in the language of the website.
<b>How</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keep the structure and layout of an inclusion website as simple as possible.</li> <li>2. Organise usability tests before publishing the site, inviting people from various language backgrounds to participate in the test.</li> <li>3. Involve the anticipated users of the site in the website or service design process.</li> </ol>
<b>Get inspired</b>	“Co-design in Smart Cities”: <a href="http://www.slideshare.net/smartcities/co-design-in-smart-cities-9174903/download">http://www.slideshare.net/smartcities/co-design-in-smart-cities-9174903/download</a>

Technical prerequisites for receiving information are an important area of concern, since barriers can easily emerge if they are not considered beforehand.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Share files and messages accessible with various software and hardware.</b>
<b>What</b>	There will always be differences in technical means available to people, and therefore these differences need to be considered.
<b>How</b>	When sharing information over the Internet with the public, always take into account that people use very different sets of software and ICT tools, including older and newer devices and software versions. Share files and messages in a way that does not require recipients to have the latest equipment or software installed.

### Expected prerequisites:

Prerequisites for accessing e-services are an issue which may not be visible to those already enjoying a full range of activities on the Internet. Nevertheless it needs to be considered and eliminated as much as possible, with alternative approaches offered.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Provide a variety of authentication methods, both state-provided, as well as others widely recognised.</b>
<b>What</b>	Since establishing one's identity and conducting legally valid and binding operations on Internet has become a natural part of living in Northern Europe, some members of the society are being cut off from these opportunities because they cannot acquire the necessary means of digital authentication. Before acquiring access to Internet services or obtaining a digital ID, a person needs to satisfy certain prerequisites. For example, Internet banking services are accessible through an Internet bank authentication system, and in order to get a bank account, one may need to provide a permanent address or a social security number.
<b>How</b>	In addition to types of identification endorsed by authorities (e-ID, bank-ID), open source and social media driven ones (open ID, e-mail account, Twitter, Facebook, Google accounts, etc.) could be used for authentication in cases where it is more important to collect as many opinions and varying viewpoints as possible, but which are not legally valid as are votes, etc.
<b>Get inspired</b>	Estonian and Slovenian participation websites ( <a href="http://www.osale.ee">www.osale.ee</a> and <a href="http://predlagam.vladi.si">predlagam.vladi.si</a> ) offer a variety of different methods of authentication (username and password, ID-card, open ID).

#### 4.1.4. Inefficient information dissemination to immigrants and immigrant organisations

Lack of efficient dissemination of information: dissemination of information to all interested people and communities is of key importance while striving for successful public participation. It may be difficult to rapidly disseminate information. Inclusion processes may fail to be transparent in the sense that it is impossible to follow up on the inclusion plans. Immigrants may not be able to access operational information. There may be cases where participants and the public do not have a clear overview of the full process (of participation).

There are a number of causes for this which may stand in the way of wider inclusion of immigrant populations, which in turn may create a feeling of being excluded and isolated from the rest of the society. Among these may be general stereotyping or seeing immigrants as a homogeneous group of people, as well as also ethnocentrism, labelling, and not considering immigrants equal partners. This in turn may result in a fixed set of contacts with certain NGOs and not the others, perhaps adding to lower self-confidence among smaller or fragmented populations which lack greater social capital. Other reasons may be a lack of interest and motivation in participation due to everyday living routines and "survival," and the emotional challenges of integration into the wider society.

Isolation : Interaction may also be challenged or limited by isolation. Isolation of immigrants may be two fold. On the one hand, immigrants may isolate themselves by being interested in participating online in the social and/or political life of their home country as diaspora, by lack of self-confidence, or by lack of

empowerment of immigrant women. On the other hand, immigrants may be isolated by the authorities due to ethnocentrism and persisting stereotypical attitudes towards immigrants.

Lack of social networks: immigrants may lack social networks that would permit them to find more opportunities to interact with authorities.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Recognise the distinct sub-groups in the audience, and use various information publishing and sharing methods and channels.</b>
<b>What</b>	Just as no two people are exactly alike, members of various linguistic and cultural communities are different, and the communities, too, differ greatly among themselves. Therefore it is always necessary to consider the differences among members of the audience when seeking to communicate with people from other nationalities and walks of life residing in a state or a local municipal area.
<b>How</b>	Recognise the possible distinct sub-groups in the audience, and use various information publishing and sharing methods and channels so that the maximum audience can receive the information and also join in discussions. Make it possible for various communities or individuals to indicate their areas of interest, and to join e-mail and news lists, etc.
<b>Get inspired</b>	system to sign up for topics of interest <a href="http://initiativet.malmo.se/epetition_core/community/page/index">http://initiativet.malmo.se/epetition_core/community/page/index</a>
<b>See also</b>	Chapter 5 <i>Toolbox</i>

As people generally tend to communicate and associate with other people they perceive as being similar to themselves, certain social or nationality groups may be overlooked or not recognised in the engagement process. Stereotypical thinking may develop and hinder the selection of inclusion activities.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Include various ethnic and international community representatives, sharing information through cross-cultural portals and organisations.</b>
<b>What</b>	There might be persistent stereotypical views and attitudes about different nationalities or language groups, which may be a reason for passing on certain information only to known groups or associations, but not to the others.
<b>How</b>	1. Be aware of prejudice and combat it proactively. Opening a dialog and including representatives of various ethnic and international communities is an important step towards widening participation opportunities in the society. 2. Outgoing information flow could be directed to cross-cultural portals and organisations, and to news portals followed by different groups of people in the community or society.
<b>See also</b>	Chapter 5 <i>Toolbox</i>

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Avoid the use of possibly labelling, stigmatising words and expressions when addressing various groups in the society.</b>
<b>What</b>	Sometimes, even with good intentions in mind, generalisations and labelling words are used when trying to reach the intended audience. For example, when official information is delivered under a title like “immigrant website,” it may not reach the intended audience.
<b>How</b>	In creating websites, creating content and composing messages to the public, consider which words people in audience would like to associate themselves with, and which words would sound discriminative or offensive. When choosing a title for a website or other publication, chose a name based on the purpose, functionality and services offered, rather than on the possible groups or users.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Provide online discussion space for sharing various viewpoints on common social issues.</b>
<b>What</b>	Immigrant communities are not great in number, nor are they homogeneous. They may not have spokespersons in their area of residence, and thus their interests may not be heard. This may result in their isolation from participatory options. At the same time, it is hard for authorities to receive input from them or become aware of their needs.
<b>How</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide interactive online space where various everyday issues are discussed and covered, with the special attention to the various minorities in the region.</li> <li>2. Moderate the discussions to lower the risk hearing only “the loudest voices.” Be sure to give the floor to other speakers, as well.</li> <li>3. Invite people to share how a common societal issue is solved in different countries and cultures.</li> </ol>



“ *#iieppro* Ahmad Azizi: Immigrants can increase the number of voters as locals are not anymore interested of politics

@Katlin\_Kover

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Create a web space where individuals and organisations can sign up to follow various topics and discussions of interest.</b>
<b>What</b>	While planning inclusion activities, it may be hard to locate the best channels to communicate with various target groups or their representatives. It may be easier to stick to existing contact persons.
<b>How</b>	Add an option to sign up for your website or promotional page to enable users to receive news and updates regarding topics they are interested in.
<b>Advice</b>	<b>Catch the attention of immigrants regarding local agendas.</b>
<b>What</b>	Provide news on the local social and political hot topics to inform people about the local issues discussed. Provide links to locally and nationally relevant publications.
<b>How</b>	Advertise the most important/relevant social and political events on the home page (the main page) and provide a link to additional information sources. Address the reader in an inviting and welcoming tone. Indicate the latest changes on the site and the most popular tools and services available.
<b>Get inspired</b>	News on home page of the City of London <a href="http://www.london.gov.uk">www.london.gov.uk</a>
<b>See also</b>	This Chapter, Section: “ <i>Political culture</i> ”

#### 4.1.5. Lack of access to information/ knowledge sharing

Immigrants may not be aware of the websites directed to them for participation opportunities, or there may be a broader unawareness of the field which may prevent them from accessing information or sharing knowledge.

Participation opportunities might be advertised through a narrow selection of channels, which limits the number of people informed. Many other interested people may still remain unaware, although they would otherwise be interested and willing to participate.

In some cases, access for individuals may be challenged by umbrella organisations/representing partners who do not necessarily pass on information to their members and other interested parties.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Add the functionality of sharing web content and media releases through social media channels to your website.</b>
<b>What</b>	Participation opportunities also need to be advertised by other available means rather than simply by publishing the invitations on an organisation's website. Add the functionality of sharing web content through social media networks.
<b>How</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that all media releases and invitations to participate are published in a way that interested persons and organisations can easily pick up or stumble upon and pass on to their own community networks.</li> <li>2. Equip an inclusion website with an RSS feed feature, enabling interested persons to collect released information automatically to their own news portals, websites, email lists, etc.</li> <li>3. Add web content sharing buttons and functionality to a website so readers can decide themselves which channels they would like to use to share the site's content.</li> </ol>
<b>Get inspired</b>	Estonian draft legislation environment EIS (eelnoud.valitsus.ee) has a sharing option on the site, where readers may choose between various communication and social media tools like Twitter, Facebook, Google+, etc., and emailing, for notifying their peers of the site content. RSS feed is also enabled.
<b>See also</b>	Chapter 5 <i>Toolbox</i>

In order to keep up with the changes in society and particular area(s) of expertise of the authorities, it is necessary to create contacts with new partners, stakeholders and experts, interested and active in the specific area of concern.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Publish your news through portals most likely to be followed by immigrants and immigrant organisations.</b>
<b>What</b>	Authorities might not know how to contact new emerging stakeholders or find new experts and interested individuals to contribute during the inclusion activities.
<b>How</b>	<p>Seek out the portals and websites most likely to be visited by people you are looking for. Negotiate possibilities to forward your news through these sites and networks. People on a grass-root level may be following news from another organisation or common portal for people with similar interests. These portals in turn often gather news from other sites they are monitoring.</p> <p>For example: By obtaining the right to publish a media release about the beginning of the inclusion process on the web portal "Good Citizen", <a href="http://www.ngo.ee">www.ngo.ee</a>, hosted by the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations, all the members of the unit, who are monitoring the news column, can pick up the news regarding the participation opportunity and then pass it on to their own sites and networks, which in turn are monitored by single individuals.</p> <p>Also, such portals have often enabled sharing their website content through various social media, which further advances the dissemination of information and the possibility of making new contacts with interested experts and organisations which could be included as partners and stakeholders.</p>



<b>Get inspired</b>	<p>The Estonian Rural Economy Research Centre is encouraging its website visitors to check out the Hungarian Rural Network's website (in Hungarian) <a href="http://www.mnvh.eu">www.mnvh.eu</a>, reading it with the help of the Google translation toolbar (see results).</p> <p>A portal for various cultural societies in Estonia, Etnoweb, aims to improve communication between and among various cultural organisations and minority communities: <a href="http://www.etnoweb.ee/Main.aspx">http://www.etnoweb.ee/Main.aspx</a></p>
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There may be a silent expectation that once information is presented to a community or an organisation, it is also passed on to all of its members. In practice, this may be not be so. On the other hand, organisations and communities may claim to represent the voice of their members, whereas the opinions of individual members have not been collected or analysed.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Suggest that umbrella organisations/representing partners use collaborative e-tools, which help them disseminate news as well as collect feedback and input from their members in a transparently and quickly.</b>
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<b>What</b>	Umbrella organisations may claim to represent the opinion of their member organisations and individuals, but may not in fact be active in processing the expected issues or collecting the opinions from as wide a circle as they are claiming to. There could be also organisations and communities which are by nature stakeholders in the issue of concern, but are not members of that particular umbrella organisation.
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<b>How</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide umbrella organisations with e-tools which promote transparency in organising their internal communication.</li> <li>2. Suggest that umbrella organisations use collaborative e-tools for including their members, collecting opinions and feedback, and formulating commonly agreed upon views in a transparently and quickly.</li> <li>3. Ask umbrella organisations to provide feedback about the internal and also external communications they have carried out regarding of the issue or legal draft design process at hand.</li> </ol>
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<b>See also</b>	Chapter 5 <i>Toolbox</i>
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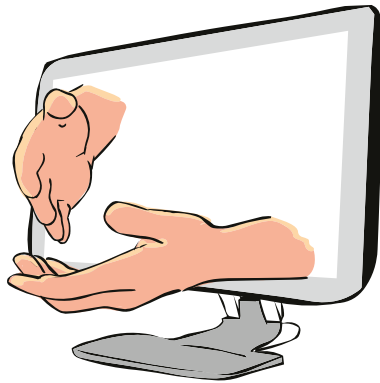
## 4.2. Interaction

Lack of skills, resources, and motivation, together with gaps and isolation, challenge and limit the interaction between authorities and immigrants.

### 4.2.1. Interaction: lack of communication and discussion skills

#### Communication skills:

Participants may lack skills in proposing ideas and comments in a brief and effective manner to authorities. They may be passive or in need of further explanation which requires good communication skills on the art of the authorities. Poor language skills may also challenge the interaction. Authorities may overlook initiatives by immigrants who fail to submit applications in a suitable/proper manner. Authorities, on the other hand, may lack public relations skills themselves.



<b>Advice</b>	Be articulate, precise, and reflective. Use plain language when appropriate.
<b>What</b>	Improve your communication skills in order to ensure better interaction with various immigrant groups. More articulate and precise communication will enhance the interaction. Be patient and recognise that there may be possible misunderstandings in the way the communication is carried out as well as in unambiguous understanding of the message.
<b>How</b>	Possible activities to improve communication are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• make a list of messages you wish to transmit</li><li>• formulate short sentences</li><li>• send only one message per communication</li><li>• provide as many hyperlinks as possible that open on new page (so that they do not lose your website on the way)</li><li>• don't give up easily—allow time for interaction</li><li>• follow up the interaction initiative</li><li>• contact the plain language experts</li><li>• Ask reflective questions to make sure your communication is understood by all participants</li></ul>
<b>Get inspired</b>	Centre for plain language in Finland <a href="http://papunet.net/selkokeskus/">http://papunet.net/selkokeskus/</a>

Advice	Train stakeholders for interaction
<b>What</b>	Sometimes partner organisations and stakeholders may lack the skills needed to address your institution or participate in the negotiations in an expected manner.
<b>How</b>	Provide web-based tutorials, and Q&A columns on your website for explaining to partners how they are expected to interact with the authorities, to prepare proposals and request meetings, and how your institution would like to be addressed. Provide online forms for smoother exchange of information. Provide various online communication opportunities (sending a notice, making a Skype call, etc.) and a list of contact persons to contact for further guidance, or in case the website information is unclear or the site's self-service functionality is out of order.
<b>Get inspired</b>	UNPAN online training centre <a href="http://www.unpan.org/ELearning/OnlineTrainingCentre/tab-id/1456/language/en-US/Default.aspx">http://www.unpan.org/ELearning/OnlineTrainingCentre/tab-id/1456/language/en-US/Default.aspx</a>



*“ #iieppro #WS1 in Botkyrka every class in schools is represented in the youth council and they can submit suggestions to the municipality*

@itirakdogan

Advice	Consider possible needs for training for partners while designing the inclusion plan.
<b>What</b>	Partners are unable to participate in a timely and constructive manner because they lack of knowledge about the procedure, legislation, etc. Civil servants need to spend extra time and effort to bring the partners up to date and provide necessary training or information sessions. Also, expectations for the procedure in working with community representatives may be set too high.
<b>How</b>	Partners are unable to participate in a timely and constructive manner because they lack of knowledge about the procedure, legislation, etc. Civil servants need to spend extra time and effort to bring the partners up to date and provide necessary training or information sessions. Also, expectations for the procedure in working with community representatives may be set too high.  Provide information well in advance, together with links to related issues and legislation. Also, when possible advise partners about available lawyers and consultants who could help them update their background knowledge and skills.
<b>Get inspired</b>	Use <a href="http://www.peopleandparticipation.net">www.peopleandparticipation.net</a> process planner to plan the inclusion process.

### Discussion skills:

Authorities may lack the skills to organise and facilitate discussion; discussions may go out of scope, a large number of participants may be intimidating and lengthy, wide-spreading discussions may be difficult to handle.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Prepare your staff for interaction with various immigrant organisations</b>
<b>What</b>	Members of other linguistic and cultural communities are difficult to include because they may not hold the expected background knowledge for active participation in the consultation process.
<b>How</b>	<p>Train for better communication between your staff and the various immigrant organisations, by organising e-simulations and/or e-model meetings where immigrant organisations can practice interaction with your institution without the stress of worrying about making mistakes.</p> <p>Make a SWOT test after each simulation together with the participants and repeat the e-simulations and/or e-model meetings until the online environment allows improved interaction between immigrant organisations and your institution.</p>
<b>See also</b>	These exercises might be helpful also for immigrant communities and individuals as a way to create social capital and have a wider interaction in society. Those with a lack of interest in participating might also be motivated to participate after being introduced to the participating process in this manner.

As explained above, stakeholders/participants may lack various skills in addressing authorities. Authorities therefore may need to train them and support them in legal, administrative and other matters during the inclusion process. Immigrants may also need to be encouraged to become more active. These challenges cause yet another challenge, the need for resources.

Immigrants may also have difficulties in web-based learning which requires a lot (too much) self-direction and initiative.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Improve the skills of your staff in holding discussions with immigrants/partners</b>
<b>What</b>	<p>Train them to reach a wider community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how to handle a large number of immigrants/partners in discussions</li> <li>how to manage lengthy and wide-spread discussions</li> <li>how to communicate the relevant information efficiently before the discussion</li> <li>how to ensure that the discussion does not lose its focus</li> </ul>
<b>How</b>	<p>Allow your staff to attend as many online discussions as possible to practice different online discussion formats</p> <p>Ask your staff to design an online discussion format that best fits your institution.</p> <p>Alternatively, ask your staff to define such a format to be developed by another body.</p> <p>Allow your staff to test the format until they feel confident enough to use it for lengthy and wide spread online discussions with large number of participants.</p>
<b>Get Inspired</b>	<p>Immigrant Integration Toolkit</p> <p><a href="http://www.gcir.org/publications/toolkit">http://www.gcir.org/publications/toolkit</a></p>
<b>See also</b>	skills, lack of motivation

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Provide online collaboration space for expressing opinions and ideas before and during the actual discussion events.</b>
<b>What</b>	New ideas and lines of thought may arise during the discussion, which will carry the discussion off track and slow down the actual expected work. This may also result in fear of not being able to handle a large number of partners and lengthy and wide-spread discussions.
<b>How</b>	Make it clear that only one issue is addressed at a time, and provide options to insert other issues into a “waiting-line” (perhaps an online list of issues) to be discussed during another event. Use wiki/Typepad to discuss different topics so that interested partners can add their comments directly into the documents, preferably before the discussion event, and therefore cut back on the actual discussion time. Use structured queries and other forms of collecting input. Explain clearly what exactly are the expectations of participation, particularly what the authorities expect from input and comments from the partners or the public.
<b>Get inspired</b>	Candi Wiki <a href="http://doku.candiwi.org/articles/view/About%20candiwi">http://doku.candiwi.org/articles/view/About%20candiwi</a> Collaborative document editing with track changes



“ *#iieppro* Bengt Eliasson, lead developer from Botkyrka Sweden: we have discussion forum Dialogforum between citizens and local politicians

@eugenieveiras

#### 4.2.2. Interaction: lack of resources

*Time:* Time is an important resource for authorities. New ideas and lines of thought may arise during the participation process which distract the process, lose focus and thus slow down the actual expected work. Making online content available in multiple languages also requires time as well as budgeting.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Set up a collaborative web space for information shared messaging, document creation and commenting.</b>
<b>What</b>	Rapid dissemination of information during the inclusion process is difficult. Much time is spent waiting during the negotiation process.
<b>How</b>	Set up and agree with partners to use a common information sharing space, like an open or private web forum or social media network. Initiate online collaborative document creation, where all participating parties can view others' input and add their own simultaneously.
<b>See also</b>	“Collaborative Tools”

### 4.2.3. Incomplete interaction and feedback process

The interaction process between authorities and immigrants may have gaps, such as missing final feedback and evaluation of the process. Also, mistrust may arise when authorities send feedback to (immigrant) NGOs which is too formal, making it difficult for them to understand how the authorities applied or valued their input.

Advice	Value communication and transparent feedback
What	Make sure you allow for communication and final feedback about the process
How	<div>Do not limit interaction with access to information</div> <div>Provide online tools for communication</div> <div>Make sure you allow mobile communication, e.g., texting possibilities from mobile phones</div> <div>Make sure your institution replies to messages from immigrants (on time)</div> <div>Allow for final feedback: provide online feedback tools, e.g., publish templates for structured feedback as well as space for unstructured comments</div> <div>Be transparent: make the feedback process open and accessible online for everybody</div>
Get inspired	<div>City of Claremont, online citizen feedback</div> <div><a href="http://www.ci.claremont.ca.us/citizenfeedback.cfm">http://www.ci.claremont.ca.us/citizenfeedback.cfm</a></div>

### 4.2.4. Interaction: lack of motivation

Sometimes it seems like certain people do not want to interact with authorities. The rigidity of “coping with every day routine” might be used as an excuse for lack of interest and motivation in participation.

Advice	Inspire people!
What	Introduce inspiring and motivated people to the public
How	<div>Publish stories on your website of ordinary people who are motivated to be included and to participate in social and political life.</div> <div>Add commenting tools to allow interaction between inspirational people and readers.</div>
Get inspired	<div>Team London Stars <a href="http://www.london.gov.uk/teamlondon/">http://www.london.gov.uk/teamlondon/</a></div> <div>volunteers/nominate-your-star</div> <div>The Finnish democracy award</div> <div><a href="http://www.tuntitili.fi/fi/demokratiapalkinto/">http://www.tuntitili.fi/fi/demokratiapalkinto/</a> (in Fin/Swe)</div> <div><a href="http://www.om.fi/Etusivu/Ajankohtaista/Uutiset/1302674675952">http://www.om.fi/Etusivu/Ajankohtaista/Uutiset/1302674675952</a> (in Fin/Swe)</div>
See also	4.1. Access

### 4.3. Cultural/political culture differences

The third category combines issues related to cultural and political culture differences as challenges to e-participation of immigrants, and also various cultural sub-groups in the society.

#### 4.3.1. Cultural differences in communication

Communication traditions: The underlying expectations about how official communication is generally carried out may pose an obstacle in communication with people from different cultural backgrounds. In the IleP region countries the written word is very highly regarded, whereas in some other places texts are more flexible and negotiable. This in turn may create a situation where messages delivered in other forms may stay unnoticed or the advantages of other communication forms are not fully exploited.

Advice	Allow different formats of online communication.
What	Official communication is generally carried out in written form, which may result in additional obstacles for people from some other cultures who are more used to talking as the primary form of presentation of ideas and concerns. Other groups of people in the society (like youths, the less educated, medically impaired, etc.) may prefer oral communication instead of written expression.
How	When interacting with the public or expecting their input, allow expressing oneself also in non-written form, like videos or audio. While planning the inclusion activities, consider possibilities for multi-modal (text, video, audio) engagement means. Allow for uploading photos and videos as a means of participation.
Get inspired	Your photos “We want Londoners to be all over this site —literally!” <a href="http://www.london.gov.uk/get-involved/your-photos">http://www.london.gov.uk/get-involved/your-photos</a> The VerkkoRuuti and RuutiExpo—youth participation in Helsinki—the expo provides for ways to express oneself—e.g. by rapping to authorities. <a href="http://nk.hel.fi/ruuti/">http://nk.hel.fi/ruuti/</a>
See also	Section Access 4.1.

**Different perceptions and formats:** The recording of personal names, key dates marking personal events like birth and marriage, residence location, and the like is not a universal practice and therefore authorities are always challenged to transfer recorded information from an unfamiliar system into its own, or obtain relevant information from a person who does not value the same data.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>learn communication skills, techniques and practices to overcome the challenges of differences in communication</b>
<b>What</b>	Train your staff for multicultural communication and competence to expect, understand and allow for this.
<b>How</b>	Organise multi-cultural learning exercises/games (both online and offline) with your staff and the various different representatives of immigrants to learn each other's communication behaviour e.g. verbal vs. written, data storage e.g. names and addresses, time management e.g. coming to appointments on time vs. late; comfort with the new technologies e.g. fear of the Internet; use of new digital technologies, digital divide among others to find common communication channels
<b>Get inspired</b>	Immigrant Integration Toolkit <a href="http://www.gcir.org/publications/toolkit">http://www.gcir.org/publications/toolkit</a>

**Unspoken culture:** In every society there is a set of pre-fixed concepts or underlying principles, which are intuitively recognised by the major local population, and therefore not further discussed in public spaces. This may pose an obstacle for new immigrants in entering in dialogue and public discussions.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Express the “self-evident” to enable people from different cultural backgrounds to join in the common discussions as well as bring possible new approaches to existing habits or practices.</b>
<b>What</b>	Prefixed concepts or underlying understandings, which are intuitively adopted and not discussed or debated by the local national population, while immigrants may be unaware of these unspoken concepts or existing suppositions, and therefore not able to fully comprehend or participate in the public discussion. At the same time their former experience with different background knowledge and expectations may be a very valuable source for improving the habits and practices in the resident society.
<b>How</b>	Provide more accessible, informative, and articulate information on the local concepts and understandings at the inclusion or your organisation's website, as well as giving the residents an opportunity to present their concepts and understandings through the use of various multi-media formats (audio, video, photo, text).  Open up online discussions on prefixed ideas and allow enough time for interaction.
<b>Get inspired</b>	” A Profile of the Interculturally Effective Person” <a href="http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cfsi-icse/cil-cai/pubpap-pubdoc-eng.asp">http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cfsi-icse/cil-cai/pubpap-pubdoc-eng.asp</a>



### 4.3.2. Culture: dissimilar approach to democracy

**Trust building with authorities:** some cultural backgrounds may cause fear and/or distrust towards authorities.

**Gender issues:** the democratic approach may differ from culture to culture. In some cultures man and women may not have the equal democratic rights in terms of participating and involving in the society. Women may be oppressed and left out of the participation processes. Women may also be challenged in terms of ICT usage and skills. A concern for gender roles and relationships is not, however, limited to women alone. It is important to ensure that any participant, whether a man or a woman, has access to the same resources, services, responsibilities, actions, etc. as anybody else.

**Unawareness & disinterest:** some immigrants may be unaware of their rights in the IleP region. They may also lack interest and the knowledge on the benefits of participation.

Advice	Identify how to build trust with immigrants
What	Train your staff to trust others and win the trust of immigrants
How	Organise learning exercises both online and offline with your staff and immigrants to find common issues and solutions for trust building.
Get inspired	"A Profile of the Interculturally Effective Person" <a href="http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cfsi-icse/cil-cai/pubpap-pubdoc-eng.asp">http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cfsi-icse/cil-cai/pubpap-pubdoc-eng.asp</a>

Advice	Identify if gender affects organising project tasks—plan accordingly
What	Train your staff to be sensitive to gender issues.
How	Organise exercises with your staff and immigrants to identify if men and women differ in the roles they take in structure of your organisation and projects. Look for ways to balance the gender divide.

Advice	Identify how the aims and tasks of your organisation may enhance performance of everyday tasks to participants.
What	Train your staff to be sensitive to concrete, daily issues.
How	Organise exercises with your staff and immigrants to identify which areas of daily life your organisation may support. Look for ways to understand the connection between your aims and tasks and the concrete conditions of your participants.

### 4.3.3. Culture: different understandings

Differences in backgrounds may cause differences in the perceptions and interpretations of the local culture. The issue of different perceptions may also manifest as prejudices and social positioning as foreigner vis-à-vis the larger society. That phenomenon may limit the building up of social capital for immigrants.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>while planning inclusion activities, be aware that different people may have different perceptions and interpretations of project key concept(s)</b>
<b>What</b>	learn what the different perceptions and interpretations may be concerning your work
<b>How</b>	meet immigrants (online and face-to-face) organise games/simulations/talks to test the different perceptions and interpretations e.g. give a list of concepts/ideas/images/colors etc., and ask them to tell you how they see, perceive, and interpret it evaluate the results of these events with them to discover together what can be done to overcome the challenges of looking at the same thing and seeing many things—I am sure there is a nice saying for that idea in English
<b>Get inspired</b>	“A Profile of the Interculturally Effective Person” <a href="http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cfsi-icse/cil-cai/pubpap-pubdoc-eng.asp">http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cfsi-icse/cil-cai/pubpap-pubdoc-eng.asp</a>
<b>See also</b>	Section 4.2 <i>interaction</i>

### 4.3.4. Political culture: different perceptions and assumptions

On NGOs/immigrants: authorities may assume that NGOs work the same way their institution do. Authorities may also assume that there is no organisation to represent a certain target group and take the lawyer’s role in discussions by themselves. Alternatively, authorities may think that certain NGOs are representative even though the NGOs in question are not necessarily competent and/or representative of the group. Besides, the public may perceive that sometimes immigrants are not interested in or might not have a practice of voluntary participation or even “doing things for the common good”, or, perhaps more likely, such practices do not manifest in the same way as expected. Finally, partner NGOs may not realise that public interests are at stake, and become unsatisfied.

**On other authorities:** some authorities may assume that another office, or politics, may complicate the process

**On processes:** some authorities may perceive the changes that can be made to the legislative draft in the Parliament as resulting in flaws in the law, and blame the ministries.

**On media:** some authorities may fear of going public during the participation process because they may perceive the news media as looking for conflict.

Advice	foster open and continuous relations with news media
What	<p>Provide regular and official information to the news media on the process</p> <p>Ask advice and feedback from news media</p> <p><i>Turn crisis into opportunities!</i></p> <p>Turn news media criticism into an opportunity for the process by benefiting and learning from their critiques</p> <p>Take criticism as feedback</p>
How	<p>Organise regular media meetings e.g. weekly/biweekly media e-breakfast:</p> <p>invite mainstream media as well as new media (e.g. bloggers, tablet journals) and alternative media (e.g. community media, immigrant organisations media)</p> <p>be open and tell them about both the strengths and the challenges of the process</p> <p>ask them to contribute feedback and expertise to the problem solution</p> <p>make these meetings accessible online with webcast and interactive with mini-blogging (e.g. Twitter)</p>

#### 4.3.5. Political culture: resistance to change

Fear of criticism and resistance to change: are crucial challenges of e-participation in this category. Here again, ethnocentrism and prejudices limit the e-participation of immigrants. Finally, partnering with the same stakeholders of earlier processes/experiences prevents new stakeholders from becoming

involved in the participation processes with new perspectives. Moreover, unjustified criticism of inclusion activities reduces enthusiasm.

Delay in change: even though authorities do not intend to resist change, the change may manifest in the institution more slowly than expected due to the political culture. This is an important challenge given the speed of the online tools and their development.

Advice	Follow and benefit from the new ideas, trends, methods, and e-tools
What	<p>follow new trends, methods, e-tools</p> <p>evaluate how they can help to improve your work</p>
How	<p>subscribe to online newspapers of think tanks, NGOs, research centres, international organisations which specialise in e-participation and especially e-participation of immigrants</p> <p>follow these resources on social media by subscribing to their pages on e.g. Facebook, or by following them on Twitter</p> <p>follow and participate yourself online in the discussions</p> <p>test new methods and e-tools in your work to see how/if they may help you</p> <p>share that information with your colleagues and partners</p>
Get inspired	<p>you may want to subscribe to the following</p> <p><a href="http://www.involve.org.uk">www.involve.org.uk</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.iap2.org">www.iap2.org</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.gcir.org">www.gcir.org</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.unpan.org">www.unpan.org</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.eu-participation.eu">www.eu-participation.eu</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.epractice.eu/community/eParticipation">www.epractice.eu/community/eParticipation</a></p>

Advice	Set up open space and continuous dialogue for new ideas, methods, e-tools
What	regularly invite guests to your institutions to listen to new /alternative ideas, methods, and e-tools
How	offline: organise informal social gatherings, e.g. Wednesday coffee and invite a guest every week from a different sector e.g. immigrant NGO, to tell you about experiences on new methods and tools. online: organise multiple chats, Skype meetings with guests, open a discussion forum space either on your website or use your institution's social media page and invite guests to post a relatively more elaborate entry on new methods, ideas, and tools.
Get inspired	Government workforce: Learning Innovations <a href="http://www.thepublicmanager.org/pdf/2011_ConferenceGuide.pdf">http://www.thepublicmanager.org/pdf/2011_ConferenceGuide.pdf</a>
Also helps	Section 4.1 <i>Access</i> , 4.2 <i>Interaction</i> ,

#### 4.3.6. Political culture: lack of inclusion and lack of equality

**Absence of inclusive activities:** Job descriptions and division of tasks of authorities often do not define relevant inclusion activities. Besides, civil society (and even immigrants) are not seen as equal partners, for various reasons such as stereotyping, lack of citizenship status and poor language skills.

**Limited participation:** most of the time the participation is limited to commenting whereas participatory law-making requires real possibility for input. Legislation seems to be drafted according to the priorities of experts and authorities and not that of the people. On another level, authorities may find that “the participation imperative” may be sometimes alienating.

**Top-down strategies:** public services are decided and designed according to the government structures rather than according to public's preferences. Moreover, policies change “every fourth year”. This situation enables authorities to keep total control of inclusion projects and thus overlook bottom-up initiatives.

Advice	Value inclusive activities
What	Make sure your staff learn how to benefit from citizen engagement and citizen inclusion
How	Let your staff test two pilot small scale online planning processes: one bottom-up participatory planning, the other top-down non-participatory planning. Let the two teams evaluate their cases and compare them from the benefit point of view
Get inspired	UNPAN Online courses—e.g. citizen engagement <a href="http://www.unpan.org/ELearning/OnlineTrainingCentre/tabid/1456/language/en-US/Default.aspx">http://www.unpan.org/ELearning/OnlineTrainingCentre/tabid/1456/language/en-US/Default.aspx</a> On inclusion officers <a href="http://www.shelf.ac.uk/union/get-involved/societies/zone-online/files/How-to-Become_Inclusion_Officer.pdf">http://www.shelf.ac.uk/union/get-involved/societies/zone-online/files/How-to-Become_Inclusion_Officer.pdf</a>
Also helps	Section 4.2 <i>Interaction</i>

## 4. 4. Technical/management

The last challenge is related to issues of lacking management skills, resources, and coordination in technical and managerial aspects of e-participation. Old habits/old networks, top-down strategies, and arbitrariness are the side issues that challenge e-participation in terms of technicalities and management in Estonia, Finland and Sweden.

### 4.4.1. Resources

**Human resources and finances:** When the task allocation of a public institution does not sufficiently take into account the activities needed to carry out inclusion policies, this will create an extra-curricular list of job-responsibilities, not duly recognised and considered. The invisible job descriptions may also fall on the shoulders of other employees, when someone leaves the office, or when organisations are restructured.

Budget is naturally another crucial resource for authorities. Improving participation processes may come with the financial burden of training the partners/immigrants for the process.

Also, costs may occur in relation to the need for compensating the costs occurring in the process of cooperation for the NGOs and stakeholders.

Advice	Set e-inclusion and inclusion skills in the human resources development plans of your organisation.
What	Set inclusion skills as both key personal and organisational competence goals. Have targets to aim for (e.g. percentage of people trained, or other)
How	Set measurable goals for organisational competence development in e-participation.
Get inspired	See if there is a good “civil society engagement plan” in one of the relevant ministries or municipalities in your country. <i>The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture</i> <a href="http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2010/Opetusministerion_kansalaisjarjestostrategia.html">http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2010/Opetusministerion_kansalaisjarjestostrategia.html</a> <i>The Finnish Ministry of the Interior</i> <a href="http://goo.gl/YL5IZ">http://goo.gl/YL5IZ</a> (in Finnish and Swedish) Also, see Tampere VALMA, <a href="http://valma.tampere.fi">valma.tampere.fi</a>
See also	Section 5.3 <i>Involve, Collaborate and Empower</i>

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Make sure that responsibilities for inclusion activities in your organisation are clear and included in job descriptions.</b>
<b>What</b>	Inclusion is typically a team activity. You may have distinct inclusion officers or similar roles. Your communication department is likely to be involved or even lead or coordinate inclusion activities. However, often many “normal employees” also have a role in inclusion. Make sure that your organisation is aware of the guidelines and even laws regarding inclusion.
<b>How</b>	Include inclusion in the proper job descriptions, organisational procedure guidelines etc. —with role/responsibility charts. Have inclusion plan templates made, or use the outline in Chapter 3 or <a href="http://supportingdiversity.eu">supportingdiversity.eu</a> .
<b>Get inspired</b>	See if there is a good “civil society engagement plan” in one of the relevant ministries or municipalities in your country. <i>The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture</i> <a href="http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2010/Opetusministerion_kansalaisjarjestostrategia.html">http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2010/Opetusministerion_kansalaisjarjestostrategia.html</a> <i>The Finnish Ministry of the Interior</i> <a href="http://goo.gl/YL5IZ">http://goo.gl/YL5IZ</a> (in Finnish and Swedish) Also, see Tampere VALMA, <a href="http://valma.tampere.fi">valma.tampere.fi</a>

**Time:** Time-limits and deadlines reduce inclusion activities. Authorities may also have the stress of justifying missing deadlines if it is necessary for better inclusion. The possible loss of focus in discussions or passive partners may also cause delays in the process which in turn may lead to the cancellation of the whole part of the process. Another time-related issue is related to the

consultation process, where invitations to participate may come too late in the process, therefore leaving no time for actual participative input.

The lack of time is also an issue for the immigrants. NGOs are overloaded with responsibilities and they are unable to work on the legislative drafts. Alternatively, as also mentioned above some immigrants may have a different way managing time than the authorities.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Allow sufficient time for various inclusion activities in a project.</b>
<b>What</b>	There are cases where only one official who is responsible for the entire drafting and inclusion process, and who at the end becomes exhausted and who may lose efficiency. The stress of lack of time may paradoxically cause mistakes of timing, or delays in replies to emails.
<b>How</b>	Schedule inclusion activities throughout all phases of projects. Be aware of overly optimistic schedules. Collecting and summarising feedback is a time-consuming task – even with automated tools. Feedback from heterogeneous participants may be more difficult to understand than “expert colleagues”.
<b>Get inspired</b>	Most ministry/national level guides suggest a minimum of 8-12 weeks for most inclusion activities like web discussions or formal commenting. However, the proper time depends on the type of project in question.  On a municipal level, a shorter time may suffice (for example, the city of Tampere suggests a ~2-4 week minimum.

**Tools:** Also, the lack of skills in using e-tools in the inclusion and general management process, or not using the existing e-tools efficiently, may lead to a perception that the usage of e-tools does not seem to create an advantage, or time and human resource saving effect.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Apply e-tools to automate work processes and shorten communication and information exchange processes, taking advantage of the suggestions in this manual.</b>
<b>What</b>	There may be no time to learn to apply new e-tools, and therefore their advantages or weaknesses stay unknown, resulting in the use of more traditional tools and methods of communication and process management.
<b>How</b>	Seek out all e-tools, which help cut back on time and costs as much as possible. The goal is to automate as much as possible or have activities run independently in parallel.  Also, outsourcing some actions in the inclusion plan to the included participants, and to other staff members, not directly involved in the content issues.

#### 4.4.2. Technical/ Management: persistence of old habits and old networks

**Traditions:** Administrative traditions may cause difficulties in the process of e-participation. The resistance to new tools may manifest as “once again another tool, another channel”. If a certain process starts in paper then authorities do most likely follow it on paper rather than digitising it.

<b>Advice</b>	<i>Yes, in my backyard.</i> <b>Promote the utilisation of e-participation within your organisation.</b>
<b>What</b>	Encourage the use e-participation. Define guidelines for e-participation in your organisation
<b>How</b>	Add e-participation to job descriptions and personal goals. If not written in your personal job description, bring it up in a development discussion and revise. Add e-participation to organisational goals. Add e-participation tools/methods/channels to organisational (mandatory) guidelines. Add e-participation tools, methods and skills courses to the training curriculum of your organisation.

**Established networks:** it may become comfortable to stick to existing partners and not to look for new thinkers/ideas. Thus stakeholders of the previous processes may be invited to be active and included in new processes which prevents new stakeholders’ inclusion. Authorities may also find it difficult to find good initiatives outside of the “regular” groups.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>"Fresh blood". Strive to find new civil society stakeholders in inclusion activities</b>
<b>What</b>	You can benefit from fresh blood and new ideas! Look for new civil society stakeholders for each project Ask for help from the civil society
<b>How</b>	If needed, ask civil society stakeholders for help. (in communications, ask people to forward invitations, share on Facebook, etc.).
<b>Get inspired</b>	The Finnish e-participation environment will have a mechanism to share projects at the inclusion planning phase. Thus an invited known stakeholder can immediately invite others to join the project.

#### 4.4.3. Technical/Management: arbitrariness

**Individual initiatives:** *the implementation of e-practices* may be very dependent on individual officials (e.g. youth worker's activity)

**Lack of standard:** different institutions may adopt different operational methods in some issues or tasks which prevents a clear overview of how authorities work hence confusion among immigrants.

In case there are not established expectations and existing standards, a good idea would be sharing best practises among the representatives of ministries, in common training events etc.

**Delay:** Feedback may break off if a legislative draft reaches participatory web-sites too late for citizen input.

<b>Advice</b>	<b>Require standardised organisational and project-level inclusion action plans in all projects affecting stakeholders outside the organisation.</b>
	<b>Work out a set of activities which could be considered in the development of inclusion plan—methods proved best from earlier experiences, etc.</b>
<b>What</b>	Set up examples and templates for inclusion plans for your organisation. Use examples from other similar organisations, or from known consultancies.
<b>Get inspired</b>	The Finnish e-participation environment ( <a href="http://www.otakantaa.fi">www.otakantaa.fi</a> ) has tools for making of inclusion plans online. For Estonian inclusion plans, see <a href="https://www.osale.ee/">https://www.osale.ee/</a>

Do you have a favorite piece of advice or know of an inspirational case?

Please let us know at [supportingdiversity.com](mailto:supportingdiversity.com)



## CHAPTER 5

# Toolbox

Improving e-participation unavoidably requires a certain level of knowledge about the available online tools. The previous advice, about how authorities may overcome the obstacles to immigrants e-participation, all include the use of online participatory and collaborative tools. This chapter presents several online tools based on what activity they may facilitate in the participation process. It should be noted that no printed list of online tools will remain relevant for a long period of time. New tools enter the industry every day, some tools may cease to work.

For an updated list of known tools, please check out the site: [supportingdiversity.eu](http://supportingdiversity.eu)<sup>1</sup>.

This manual approaches participation as an empowering process for the governed. Therefore, it adopts the participation process steps that include; *Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate* and *Empower* as developed by the International Association of Public Participation. The manual also analyses the obstacles to e-participation in Estonia, Finland, and Sweden based on empirical data. The table following presents an overview of the participation process, the goal and the possible obstacles in each step, and the kind of online tools that may help authorities overcome the obstacles and apply our advice. The chapter later presents several tools to inspire authorities in their use of online tools in e-including immigrants in the participation processes.



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<sup>1</sup> We kindly ask you to share your experiences with other tools and services with us and other interested readers

### Online tools to overcome the obstacles in the empowering participation process

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
<b>Goal</b>	provide balanced and objective information	obtain public feedback on analysis	work directly with the public throughout the process	partner with the public in each aspect of the decision	place final decision-making in the hands of the public
<b>Possible obstacles often relate to</b>	Access Technical/management	Interaction Cultural issues	Interaction Political cultural issues Technical/management	Access Interaction Political culture	Political culture
<b>Overcoming obstacles online with</b>	e-mail lists websites Blogs Microblogs Vlogs Social networking sites Translation tools Aggregating tools Web feed	websites Blogs Miniblogs Vlogs Social networking sites Translation tools Voting tools	Translation tools Planning tools Collaborative working tools Instant messaging & Voice and video call	Translation tools Planning tools Collaborative working tools Instant messaging & Voice and video call	Translation tools Planning tools Collaborative working tools Instant messaging & Voice and video call

The following presents several tools that may help authorities to overcome possible obstacles in different phases of a participation process.

## 5.1. Inform

### 5.1.1 E-mail lists

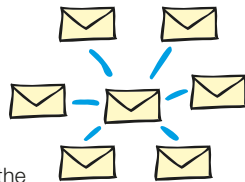
E-mail lists allow you to send information to all the people who have signed up for your mailing list. Many organisations use e-mail lists to disseminate, for instance, their newsletters online. Mailing list hosting services include:

**FreeLists** (freelists.org) provides free e-mailing list hosting.

**Mailchimp.com** (mailchimp.com) is an e-mail marketing and e-mail list manager.

### 5.1.2. Web publishing

There are a number of service providers that offer free hosting of your website, some



providers additionally offer content managing systems (or CMS) that allow you to design and maintain a website with only a minimum of technical skills. These are usually offered in free and full versions, where the free version has some limited functionality.

**Wordpress** (wordpress.com) is as a blogging tool that can be equally seen as a free web publishing and content management platform. It offers a variety of layout templates. The wordpress software can also be downloaded and installed to a server of your own choosing.

**Edicy** (edicy.com) is a simple, customisable tool for creating a website. Minimum technical skills are needed and has both a free and a paid “pro” version. The user interface is available in 16 different languages.

**Google sites** (sites.google.com) is a free and simple tool for setting up websites. The choice of layouts and additional options, however, is smaller compared to for example Wordpress.

*Links on your website:* A link you wish to share on your website may be very long and difficult to read. Service providers offer URL forwarding service so you can make a short version of the URL address (link) and use the short link instead of the long one. There is a variety of short URL service providers, including:

shorturl.com  
goo.gl  
tinyurl.com  
ow.ly/url/shorten-url

*Links collections:* You may collect, organise, save, and share links with social bookmarking services like Delicious (deli and Diigo (diigo.com)).

### 5.1.3. Blogs

Blogs are web-based services which allow publication in written, audio, and video formats. They are often used to express opinions and facilitate discussion with the blog followers about a given topic.



### Benefits of blogs include:

- structured organisation of your content usually in chronological order;
- ready for use after registering with an online blog service provider;
- an easy-to-use text editor which allows you to see the article while writing it, almost in the same form as it will appear after publishing it;
- support embedding of various widgets provided by other service providers such as YouTube videos and Slideshare slides.

*Some free blogging service:* **Wordpress** (wordpress.com) is a blogging and publishing service with a focus on aesthetics, web standards, and usability. The Wordpress blog can be made private, meaning that it is visible only to the people selected by the blog owner, or otherwise publicly visible to everyone. The user interface is available in 120 languages.

**Blogger** (blogger.com) is a publishing tool from Google for sharing text, photo, and video. In order to blog in Blogger, a Google account is necessary. Private blog may be shared with up to 100 Google account holders. The user interface is available in 50 languages.

If you have a blog, it may appear on **Technorati** (technorati.com), the largest blog search engine in the world. Once you register Technorati tracks “blog reactions” or blogs that link to yours. You can search for your name on Technorati and subscribe to RSS alerts, so that you know about it when someone blogs about you.

#### 5.1.4. Microblogs

Microblogs or miniblogs differ from traditional blogs for they provide a forum for more limited content at a time. Organisations or individuals may use microblogs to announce short and condensed messages.

**Twitter** (twitter.com) is the best known microblog which allows posting up to 140-character long text updates. Users can follow other users’ tweets. Posting regular tweets and following the tweets of the target audience may increase your visibility and the number of your followers. Please note that your tweets may be set as public so that anybody can see your updates, or private so that only your followers can view your content.

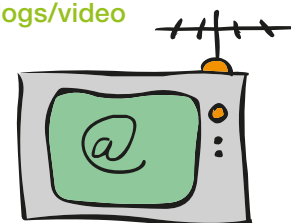


**Facebook** (facebook.com) and **Google+** (plus.google.com), the popular social networking sites, may also be used as microblogs with the status updates that are visible to all the other users in your network. Please note that the status updates on Facebook and on Google+ may also be set as public so that everybody may see your updates.

**Tumblr** (tumblr.com) is an easy-to-use tool, which allows sharing content in text, photo, and video formats. The tool provides its users with a useful support centre.

#### 5.1.5. Vlogs (video blogs/video sharing tools)

Using video sharing tools, vlogs, may help you increase your outreach. Providing information in video format in an interactive and Web 2.0 sharing environment may be beneficial in reaching people with difficulties in reading and /or language difficulties.



Some video sharing tools include: **YouTube** (youtube.com) and **Vimeo** (vimeo.com) are video sharing websites where users can upload, share, view, and comment on videos made by themselves and by others.

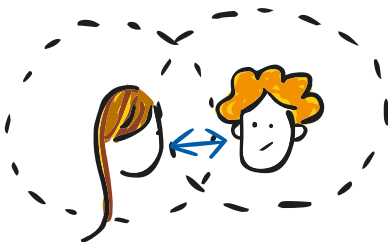
**VideoJug** (videojug.com) is focused on “how to..?” videos.

**Animoto** (animoto.com) helps to turn photos, video clips and music into videos to share with everyone.

**Screenr** (screenr.com) is a web-based screen recorder to make screen-casts.

### 5.1.6. Social networking sites

Social networking sites consist of individuals and/or organisations that are related to each other in various ways, depending on the network type (e.g., friendship, interests, business relationships, etc.).



#### Benefits of social networking sites include:

- joining existing networks
- creating new networks
- sharing information in real time with mobile applications
- increasing outreach
- increasing interaction
- increasing participation

**Facebook** (facebook.com) is a social networking service that enables people to connect with friends and others who work, study and live around them. Facebook provides an opportunity to share text, photos and videos with friends on your contact list. Organisations can use Facebook by creating a page or group. The main advantage to an organisation of having a Facebook page or group is that everyone who likes or joins the organisation will receive updates to their own Facebook wall, and therefore can be updated about news. For example, when authorities start an inclusion process, they can post information on their Facebook page so all those following their activities will receive an update.

**Google+** (plus.google.com) is a networking platform that was built as an alternative to Facebook, enables forming online groups and communities named as circles of people in order to share different information between different circles of people. It also includes video and group chat features. It allows sharing updates with particular groups, and collecting information on keywords or topics of interest.

Other popular social networking tools include, among others: **diaspora** (diasporaproject.com), **badoo** (badoo.com), **foursquare** (foursquare.com), **IRC Galleria (Finland)** (irc-galleria.net), **ning** (ning.com), **Tagged** (tagged.com).

It should be noted that any list of social networking services is likely to be partially outdated at the time of printing.

Many sites analyse the popularity of web sites and social media; ebizma<sup>2</sup>, for instance is specific to social media while alexa<sup>3</sup> and comscore<sup>4</sup> analyse the popularity of websites.

2 <http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/social-networking-websites>

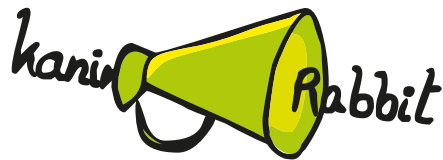
3 <http://www.alexa.com/topsites>

4 <http://www.comscore.com>

Finally, **AddThis.com** (addthis.com) will enable authorities to allow others to share their information wherever they like.

**Wikipedia**<sup>5</sup> alone lists over 200 social networking sites.

### 5.1.7. Translation tools



#### 5.1.7.1. Making a website multilingual

You may provide a multilingual website by integrating a translation gadget on your website. The gadget allows the user to select a preferred language on the website, and translate the content immediately.

**Google translate gadget**<sup>6</sup> can be added to any web site to enable site visitors to easily translate

<sup>5</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_social\\_networking\\_websites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites)

<sup>6</sup> [http://translate.google.com/translate\\_tools](http://translate.google.com/translate_tools)

content into one of the 50 available languages on Google translation tools.

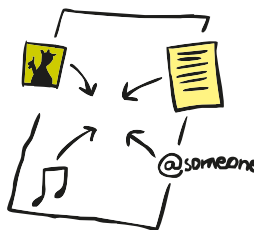
**Microsoft translator widget**<sup>7</sup> is a similar tool providing translation to and from over 30 languages.

### 5.1.8. Aggregating tools

Using multiple social media tools may be challenging in terms of managing the updates and the interaction. Aggregating tools allow mixing different types of social media content, creating blogs that gather all kinds of feeds so they appear on one page.

Some of the services include: **flavors.me** (flavors.me) and **about.me** (about.me) allow you to create a website that collects social media updates, photos and videos into a unified web presence.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.microsofttranslator.com/widget>



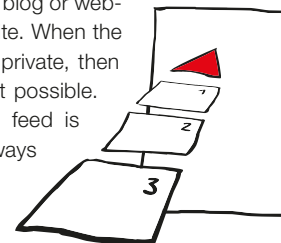
**Posterous** (posterous.com) is a service for posting material on many social media channels at once, eliminating the need to post material separately to each one.

**Paper.li** (paper.li) allows you to pull together different content, e.g. Facebook or Twitter feeds or any other web content and publish it as a newspaper.

**Civicboom** (civicboom.com) is a content sharing tool which allows anyone to post requests for specific items of content and to share content. It is possible to geotag the content (set location on the map).

### 5.1.9. Web feed

A web feed is a data format used for providing users with frequently updated content, e.g. news from another public blog or website, without visiting the site. When the blog or website is made private, then reading a web feed is not possible. The most common web feed is RSS. There are different ways for reading web feeds:



*Web browsers:* users can add feeds of websites of interest to their web browser favourites menu, and be notified when there have been changes to the websites. Learn about subscribing to a feed using the **Microsoft Internet Explorer**<sup>8</sup>, **Firefox**<sup>9</sup> or **Safari**<sup>10</sup> browsers. **Google Chrome** cannot automatically read feeds, but an official extension can be downloaded from [chrome.google.com/webstore](http://chrome.google.com/webstore).

*E-mail clients:* RSS feeds can be viewed as e-mails on many of the e-mail client programmes. For example, read how to set up MS Outlook to read RSS feed<sup>11</sup>.

*RSS readers:* there are also online RSS readers. The main advantage is that feeds can be read from any computer or mobile device. Examples of such services are **Bloglines**<sup>12</sup> and **Google Reader**<sup>13</sup>

8 <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/Using-feeds-RSS>

9 <http://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/Live%20Bookmarks>

10 <http://www.apple.com/safari/features.html#rss>

11 <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/outlook-help/add-an-rss-feed-HA010159539.aspx?CTT=3>

12 <http://www.bloglines.com/index.html>

13 <http://www.google.com/reader>.

See also HOW TO: Use Google Reader Like A Rockstar: <http://mashable.com/2008/12/07/how-to-use-google-reader>

which enable searching, subscribing, creating and sharing news feeds, blogs and rich web content.

**FeedDemon** ([feeddemon.com](http://feeddemon.com)) is an RSS feed reader for Windows.

**RSSOWL** ([rssowl.org](http://rssowl.org)) is for Windows, Linux (32 Bit and 64 Bit) and Apple Mac OS X, which can save selected information in various formats for offline viewing and sharing. There are tutorials available for various features of RSSOWL.

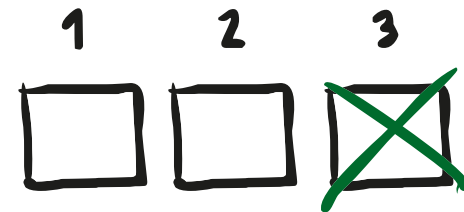
Authorities may also integrate the **AddThis** button ([addthis.com](http://addthis.com)) on their website to help spread their content. The button can also be installed into your browser allowing you to share any content you find interesting even if the sharing option is not provided by the website. Alternatively, **Lockerz Share** tool ([share.lockerz.com](http://share.lockerz.com)) can be used to share information to many desired channels. Lockerz Share tool exists for a variety of different web services.

## 5.2. Consult

All the above tools may also be used in the consult phase. The consult phase aims at collecting feedback from the public. Therefore, additionally,

authorities may also benefit from the online petition and voting tools.

### 5.2.1. Petition and voting tools



Online voting tools allow platforms to collect public feedback. Examples of online voting include:

**Petitsioon.ee** ([petitsioon.ee](http://petitsioon.ee)); Developed in Estonia, a private initiative, the site allows obtaining feedback. The tool can be used for collecting signatures, and carrying out opinion polls.

**ipetitions** ([ipetitions.com](http://ipetitions.com)) is a free online service for launching a campaign or petition. Registration is required.

**The Initiative Channel** ([www.aloitekanava.fi](http://www.aloitekanava.fi)) is a national online service in Finland, which was devel-

oped to fulfil the requirement to find ways for young people to take part in determining youth work and youth policy, as stipulated in the Youth Act. In Finland, the service is part of the Finnish Government's Child and Youth Policy Programme 2007–2011, and many municipalities have implemented it as one of the participation and consultation systems for children and young people.

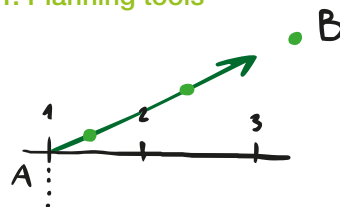
The Initiative Channel is an open and direct form of participation enabling young people to share their ideas, comment on other people's ideas, and support and log in to initiatives of their choice. The e-democracy tool also makes it possible to track how initiatives are being processed in a municipality. One of the benefits of the service is that everybody can participate as long as they have an online connection, computer and login name. Users are able to express their opinions using a nickname or anonymously, so participating is easy.

Online questionnaire services do also provide multiple opportunities for collecting feedback from the public. These services include **webropol** (webropol.com), **digium** (digium.fi) and **survey-monkey** (surveymonkey.com).

## 5.3. Involve, Collaborate and Empower

The involve, collaborate and empower steps of the participation processes include co-working with the stakeholders. The online tools below permit co-working and collaborating online both in synchronous or asynchronous modes. As translation tools appear above please see the previous section for those tools.

### 5.3.1. Planning tools



#### 5.3.1.1. Inclusion process planning

The inclusion Process planner<sup>14</sup> developed in the UK helps you to choosing methods suitable in vari-

14 <http://www.peopleandparticipation.net/display/ProcessPlanner/Scope+introduction>

ous stages of planning where you want to involve people in a project, common decision-making activities, or other participatory events. The Process planner prompts you with a series of questions, which are compared to a database of inclusion methods to determine which of these best fits your needs. It is often a good idea to combine different methods at different stages of a decision-making cycle.

**The Finnish e-participation environment project** (osallistumisymparisto.fi and otakantaa.fi) develops web services for enhancing and enabling dialog and interaction between citizens, politicians and public servants. The services provide tools and methods for, e.g., inclusion planning, deliberative discussions, different kinds of online discussions, questionnaires and surveys, formal commenting of drafts and municipal and national initiatives. The services are introduced in phases, mainly between mid-2012 and 2013, and can be used on a local, regional and national level. Target groups of the toolset are governmental organisations as well as NGO's and individuals.



### 5.3.1.2. Scheduling meetings and events

Online scheduling tools save resources in planning an event with multiple stakeholders.

**Doodle** (doodle.com) allows you to select a range of dates for a meeting, and ask everyone to indicate their preferences. You can decide the meeting time according to the options most suitable to the participants, sending all a notification with the final decision on date and times. Additionally, all participants can see which dates and times other people had preferred for the meeting. Doodle is simple, quick and requires no registration.

**Wiggio** (wiggio.com) is an easy to use toolkit, allowing you to keep a shared calendar (with text message reminders), poll groups in real-time, send bulk text messages, store files in one common folder, and create to-do lists. The advantage of Wiggio compared to others is the possibility to set up virtual conference calls <sup>15</sup>.

**Zwiggo** (zwiggo.com) is a group sharing platform for private and public groups. Each group can de-

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<sup>15</sup> Watch a tutorial: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNBXyDUNl7I&feature=related%20w=400&h=200%5d>

sign their own space by adding applications for chatting, sharing photos, files, links, documents and books, creating and assigning to-dos, date planning and calendaring, putting up sticky notes, having discussions, mapping out locations, blogging, getting votes and making decisions <sup>16</sup>.

### 5.3.2. Collaborative working tools

Collaboration tools allow collaborative creation and management of documents online, and may be useful in allowing many people to work on the same document at the same time. When you use online collaboration tools, there is no need to send static documents between the collaborators by email. Instead, a document can be created and commented on online.

#### 5.3.2.1. Document creation and editing tools

Document creation tools allow instant online collaboration with commenting, editing and discussion functionalities. Here is a list of somewhat similar on-

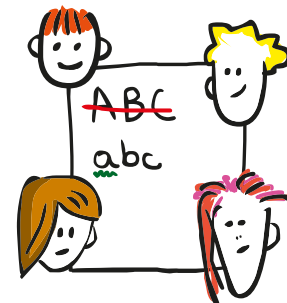
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<sup>16</sup> See an overview video: <http://www.vimeo.com/30843187> w=400&h=200

line tools, which do not require registration or any user account, are easy to use, and useful for recording meeting minutes, brainstorming, project planning, drafting sessions and

more. The tools below allow multiple people to edit the same document at once, and all changes are instantly reflected on every participant's screen. Once the document is created it can be easily shared by simply sharing the document's URL (link) with others. All co-authors can pick a personal colour that indicates their original text in the document.

**Sync.in** (sync.in) allows you entering a suitable name for your online document upon creation. Basic text editing tools, such as bold typeface are provided. You can save and export versions of the document. The time slider function provides an overview of the document changes over time. A chat room is also included so users can add comments and discussions next to the document editing area.



**Primarypad** (primarypad.com) has all the above-mentioned features similar to Sync.in, but additionally it allows importing files to be edited. Up to 15 people are allowed to collaboratively work together in real time. The document will be saved online for 30 days. You can save up to 50 revisions.

**Netcomment.net** (netcomment.net) is a service that makes the process of commenting and approving digital material easy and efficient. In addition to commenting, it provides too to manage the workflow of document editing and approval.

**YooMoot** (www.yoomoot.com) is a place to participate in structured debates. Although currently in a “by invitation” mode, it has received praise from technology media companies and is a service perhaps worth trying out later.

**Google docs & Spreadsheets** (docs.google.com) allow creating collaborative online documents and spread sheets with all the main possibilities of document editing software, being somewhat similar and recognisable for those used to Microsoft Word and Excel or LibreOffice. You can also upload your existing files, pictures or videos and share them with other users. The files may be exported and saved,

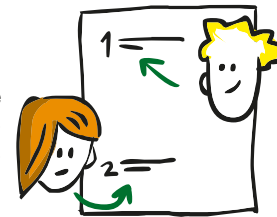
or shared online with selected users or made public to everyone. The tool thus has more sophisticated features, but requires registration and a user account.

#### 5.3.2.2 Wikis

A wiki is a website where users can collaboratively add, modify, or delete its content.

Wikis keep track of the history of changes in a text; so that earlier versions of the document can be tracked when necessary. Wikis do not allow instant co-creation of a document, an article will be locked while it is being edited by someone. But it allows making changes when other users are not working with the document.

Wikis are especially useful for building knowledge bases because they allow expansion and creation of new articles or sub-articles when new information becomes available. Creating sub-articles and building connections between articles makes it



easy to use wikis as a source of information <sup>17</sup>. Although most wikis require downloading and installation on a web server, there are also web-based versions of wiki software available:

**Wikispaces** (wikispaces.com) allows you creating a wiki which you and your readers can add to, edit and change in any way

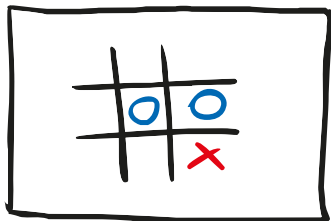
**EditMe** (editme.com) is a wiki hosting service that empowers non-technical users to quickly and easily build and host editable web sites.

**Wikidot** (wikidot.com) is a wiki hosting service which allows the creation of up to 5 wikis for free, with limited storage space.

#### 5.3.2.3. Visualisation tools

Visualisation tools allow drawing or sketching ideas collaboratively. These tools can be especially useful during online meetings; for instance during a Skype call when participants need to visualise their ideas.

<sup>17</sup> See the comparison of wiki:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison\\_of\\_wiki\\_software](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_wiki_software)



Some easy-to-use visualization tools include:

**Dabbleboard** (dabbleboard.com) is a drawing and sharing tool that does not require registration. There are many possibilities to draw elaborate shapes for sharing ideas. It is possible to download and upload files.<sup>18</sup>

**CoSketch** (cosketch.com) is a multi-user online whiteboard designed to give you the ability to quickly visualise and share your ideas as images. No registration needed. You can upload and share images to draw on or use Google maps as the background for your sketches to show directions or share trips.

**Scriblink** (scriblink.com) is an interactive whiteboard that is geared more for educational purposes, and allows using various characters and math symbols. In addition to chat it is possible to use VoIP (voice over IP) conferencing at the same time.

**Chartle** (chartle.net) allows easy creation of charts and embedding them into a blog or a website. In addition to the variety of charts and diagrams, it is possible to make intensity maps and geo maps.

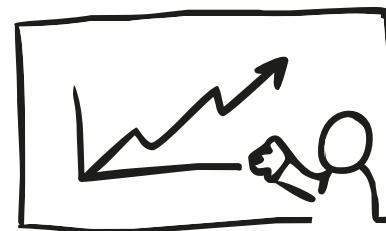
**Mindmeister** (mindmeister.com) is a collaborative online mind-mapping tool. The basic version is free and facilitates sharing folders and files as well as task lists. There are various templates for brainstorming, project plan, to do list among others. It is possible to chat and attach files to the mind-map.

#### 5.3.2.4. Online slide presentation tools

Online presentation tools are useful in many ways. For example, when the meeting is carried out online, using Skype, all participants could simultaneously follow the slide presentation presented by the speaker.

*Sharing presentations online has the following advantages:*

- The presentation file is too big to be sent by e-mail, or there is doubt about whether everyone can receive large files by e-mail.
- Uploading presentations to a website can help spreading the information among a wider audience, attracting possibly interested people outside the existing contact list, and community members.
- Online presentations can be shared very easily by sharing and forwarding only the link to the presentation instead of the file itself.
- The viewers of the presentation do not need additional software for viewing it.

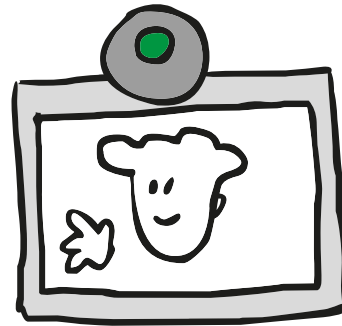


<sup>18</sup> Tutorial video is available at <http://www.dabbleboard.com/tour>

**Slideshare** (slideshare.com) allows uploading slide presentations to the web for sharing with other people.

**Prezi** (prezi.com) is meant for preparing creative presentations collaboratively over the Web.

**Issuu** (issuu.com) is a publishing platform which enables its users uploading and sharing PDF documents such as magazines, catalogues, and presentations.



### 5.3.3. Instant messaging & voice and video call

Instant messaging tools allow discussions and meetings free of place restrictions.

*Instant messaging tools offer two basic functions:*

- Chatting—participants can collaborate and discuss issues in a common chat environment and the whole discussion may be saved for further reference.
- Calling—participants can collaborate over a voice call (VoIP). For smaller meetings it is enough to use a laptop's built-in speakers and microphone. For bigger meetings more advanced technical equipment like loudspeakers, a stand-alone video camera and microphone may be needed.

**Skype** (skype.com), **MSN messenger** (explore.live.com), **Yahoo messenger** (messenger.yahoo.com), and **Google Talk** (google.com/talk) offer similar functionalities of chat and video call, although Google Talk seems to be more efficient with slow Internet connections.

For concrete example on how to use various collaboration tools—for example wikis, collaborative writing tools, microblogs and instant messaging and VoIP tools together<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> See for example Social media for citizen participation. Report on the Somus project. <http://www.vtt.fi/int/pdf/publications/2011/P755.pdf>

## CHAPTER 6

# Conclusion

**The Immigrant Inclusion by eParticipation project aims at bridging tools, activities and concepts of citizen communities and governments' top-down participation, searching for practices and technologies in terms of interoperability and integration, facilitating community building, developing relationships between immigrant communities and authorities, and thereby promoting more effective participation of immigrants in society.**

The present manual is an outcome of a project which provides authorities with an analysis of obstacles to e-participation, particularly with regard to immigrants. In an effort to reach the above goals, the manual presents these obstacles based on data derived from workshops and interviews with immigrants and authorities throughout the project.

After the analytical presentation of the challenges and limitations of immigrant inclusion through e-participation, the manual humbly proposes advice to authorities on how they could cope with these obstacles. The advice is derived from partners in the project, including authorities. There has also been some advice contributed by other authorities

during the interviews. It is important to note that the advice in this manual is by no means the only way to overcome these challenges. Advice would vary based on the particular conditions at each institution. Moreover, various advice offered differs in terms of difficulty and feasibility. Authorities may act on some ideas more quickly than on others, depending on how the advice relates to the administrative structure of the institution.

The main conclusion, based on the analytical study of various challenges and limitations concerning the e-participation of immigrants, suggests that there are four main areas which present obstacles:

### Access

to immigrants, and allowing immigrants to have access authorities

### Interaction

with immigrants and immigrant organisations as stakeholders

### Cultural/political differences

be aware of differences

evaluate institutions' political cultures

### Technical/management issues

improve technical and management conditions

These are four areas to focus on for authorities who want to improve immigrant inclusion by e-participation.

The results reached in this study and presented in this manual make it clear that the use of new information and communication technology (ICT) and, more specifically, community and collaborative technologies (CCT) by the authorities is not automatic enough to attain successful e-participation, especially with regard to vulnerable groups such as immigrants. Authorities need to be more aware of the difficulties this group encounters in the online social inclusion process, and to take these difficulties into account.

Often even fairly simple adjustments on websites and/or inclusion of mobile technologies may bring about notable changes in online inclusion of immigrants. These simple adjustments, for instance enabling different formats of communication or expression such as photos or videos, may easily be overlooked, forgotten or ignored if authorities are not aware of the challenges and limitations of being included in a new social and political system and in a new society.

Other measures, however, may seem more challenging to authorities. Training, following new trends, and opening up more space to immigrant stakeholders may take more time and greater effort to implement. In such cases authorities need to see the benefits of including immigrants more effectively in decision-making processes, especially (but not only) with regard to planning immigration and inclusion policies and strategies. Excluding the core component of such policies from the planning process would lead to failure, or at best to very modest results, meaning wasted resources. Efficient management of resources, on the other hand, appears as one of the main obstacles in immigrant inclusion. Therefore it is in the authorities' interests to make most of ICT to include immigrants in decision-making processes, beginning with the planning phase.

Finally, immigrant inclusion through e-participation is an exceptionally challenging subject because immigrants, society, political processes, and ICT all

change and develop continuously and rapidly. There will always be new challenges and new limitations in this field. Current obstacles may no longer apply in a few years, and new obstacles may emerge along the way. Therefore, an important issue for authorities is to set solid policies and strategies about e-inclusion of immigrants. Once included in the process, immigrants as stakeholders would be the best source of information for authorities about new challenges of immigrant inclusion.

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